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RUSSO-CHINESE EMPIRE



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A RUSSO-CHINESE EMPIRE

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A RUSSO-CHINESE EMPIRE

An English Version of
“ Un Empire Russo-Chinois ”

BY

ALEXANDRE ULAR

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Translator's Preface

THE contents of this book divide themselves under two main headings, a description of Chinese civilization, defending the Chinese against Western contempt, and an account of the processes by which the small oligarchy, who really direct the policy of Russia, have been able to annex for all practical purposes Mongolia and Manchuria with the ulterior aim of incorporating at least the north of China in the Russian Empire. In both branches of his inquiry the author presents facts which have hitherto escaped the notice of Western Europe, and also presents known facts under a new light.

It may be conceded from the outset that the author not infrequently damages his case by overstating it, less perhaps in substance than in form ; and that his story of the relations between Russia and the Manchu Dynasty is not likely to gain credence with those who demand stringent documentary evidence ; the author's documents being, as a leader writer of the *Morning Post* has remarked, supported by his theory, rather than his theory by his documents.

On the other hand, well known and acknowledged facts as to the Chinese are in accordance with the general argument of the author. The industry of the Chinese is proverbial, so is his fidelity to a contract,

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while those few Englishmen who have come into close personal contact with Chinese gentlemen speak of their refinement, amiability, and high intellectual culture no less favourably than M. Ular. Sir Thomas Wade informed the present writer that this class of Chinese gentlemen are not as a rule to be found in the Mandarinate or among the *litterati*, with whom, and especially with the former, they have little sympathy. Readers of Dr. Dill's masterly volume on the last century of the Western Empire know that he shows a somewhat similar condition of society existing at that period in Europe. In China, Europeans come into contact as a rule with the officials, or the *litterati*, or the outer fringe, both in the social and geographical sense, while their political transactions have been carried on with the servants of a particularly corrupt and decadent Court, which has adopted the outward veneer of Chinese ceremonial without adopting the Chinese virtue of fidelity to engagements.

The phenomenon of a ruling class and ruling organization inferior in the essentials of civilization to the people ruled, is a phenomenon incomprehensible by Western conceptions; it would seem to occur where natural conditions demand and reward co-operation in agriculture. The same phenomenon was repeated in Mesopotamia and in Egypt; if, indeed, Chinese civilization is not an offshoot from Mesopotamian. Where combination is necessary to regulate the flow of rivers, either to stop floods or for the purposes of irrigation, and where soil and climate are favourable to the results of this combination, agriculture as a civilizing agent assumes a far greater importance than is the case where the farms can be worked in isolation. The business of production and the whole organization

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connected therewith becomes more important than military organization. Western civilization is based in the majority of its ideals and habits of thought upon military organization in one form or another ; thus Westerners were quite unprepared for the civilization of China, and encountering only her semi-barbarous Court with its corrupt agents, or those Chinese who were imperfect representatives of their own civilization, declared that China was not civilized, and have habitually treated her as an abject and derelict community. It is true that China has been allowed the merit of having preceded Europe in many strictly utilitarian discoveries ; but M. Ular is the first European who has described with sympathy the Chinese system of co-operative production, an ideal whose realization is the despair of the advanced political thinkers of the West. Until the word of the Western man is as good as his bond, until all the partners in a co-operative association can accept losses and bad times without the disruption of the society, Europe must admit her inferiority to China.

Books dealing with China are almost without exception hostile. We have, for instance, Professor Douglas' *China*, in the Story of the Nations series, a book for popular use. The readers of this book would imagine that there was nothing in Chinese history but wars, revolutions, famines and other disasters, while Chinese intercourse with Europe has been a continuous display of perfidy and bullying. The Professor seldom misses an opportunity of scoring a mark against the Chinese ; he represents them as alternately ridiculous and intolerable. Similarly Mr. R. James, in his account of his travels in Manchuria, sees in the Chinese a people sadly in want of the blessings of the Anglo-Indian

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Government, and as an Indian Civil Servant he is deeply moved by the disingenuous dealings of the Chinese with reference to the opium trade. Supposing those Chinese, who protest against the abuse of opium, to be as ardent as our own temperance reformers, the inconsistency of China in this matter is no greater and no less than that of England. A minority hold and loudly proclaim extreme views on the subject, the majority acquiesce in the drink traffic, fortunes are made out of it by some Englishmen. Assume a collapse of our military power and a demand by our conquerors that we should admit Russian or German spirits duty free. Even those who do not belong to the temperance party and do make fortunes out of the sale of fermented liquors would hold strong views as to the nature of the demand, and the character of the people by whom it was made. Mr. James observed the existence of the communistic Republics in Manchuria described in such interesting detail by M. Ular but did not learn their history.

Books written by missionaries about China are inevitably tainted by prejudice; a man can only be a worthy missionary if he earnestly believes that the people whom he proposes to convert are in many respects defective. The claim to convert is in itself an assertion of superiority. It is not necessary to follow M. Ular in his implied contention that the best Christian has nothing to teach the best Chinese, to see that the protection afforded to the missionaries and *their converts* by the Governments who hold extra-territorial privileges in China must necessarily compromise the character of missionaries. Having accepted this protection, the missionaries become part of the brute force brought to bear upon China by the superior

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armaments of the West. If to this is added advantages taken by converts against the laws and customs of their own country, and even a few cases of such nefarious trading, on the part of missionaries, happily not English, as M. Ular illustrates by examples, we have no difficulty in believing that the missions may have become the centre of anti-foreign prejudice on the part of the Chinese; and we understand why they are the objects of the attacks of Chinese mobs.

M. Ular's luminous account of the expansion of Russia in the Far East and in particular of her strange alliance with the Thibetan Buddhists is in accordance with Lord Lansdowne's despatches with reference to the present Thibetan Mission; in these we saw that Lord Lansdowne's advisers were nervous about an exchange of compliments between the Czar and Dalai-Lama, but had not divined their startling significance. M. Ular's book was written before the publication of the despatches. Throughout the whole of this part of M. Ular's book we wonder less at the perfidy of Russia than at the blindness of the Western powers—a blindness the more remarkable because the eastward gravitation of Russia is no secret. It is evident that the peculiar position of the Manchu Dynasty has escaped the observation of European diplomatists. They might perhaps have learned something from Sir Robert Hart, but their prejudice in favour of seeing a European Government in the Manchu Court closed their ears to the voices of those more fully acquainted with the real situation.

Russia being thus unmasked, what can be done by the West? Li-hung-chang foresaw that the virtual cession of Manchuria would involve Russia in war either with Japan, or with the Western powers. His

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prediction is being realized at the present moment. This acute statesman thought that under such conditions the Manchu Dynasty would be able to recover its position ; and in the event of a Japanese victory over Russia, we can see Japan, firmly established in Korea, handing over Manchuria to the dynasty, that is to say, back to Russia, with the approbation of the Western powers. But matters would not end there. It is clear from M. Ular's account, and from an article on Russia's financial position by Mr. O. Eltzbacher, published in the *Nineteenth Century* for March, that the Russian oligarchy is in a desperate position. European Russia pays no less a price than chronic famine for Siberian railways and other enterprises in the Far East. Mr. Eltzbacher, quoting official Russian statements, tells us that in Russia the minimum of grain required per head of the population for human consumption is 330 kilogrammes ; in 1895 grain exports were unusually large, but the population of Russia had to live on 240 kilogrammes of grain per head. How could grain be exported when the people were being starved to the extent of losing one-fourth of their necessary sustenance ? The explanation is that the exported grain is collected as arrears of taxes, and goes to the interest on the State loans contracted in order to pay for Far Eastern and other expansion. The credit of Russia is maintained in Europe at the expense of starving her population to serve the ambitions of an unscrupulous oligarchy. Thus the oligarchy is imperatively driven, as M. Ular puts it, to find an economic base in the Far East. Chinese industry, Mongolian and Manchurian gold, are to provide the sinews of war for an Empire which will be a repetition of the Empire of Khubla-Khan. The only alternative to the realization of this dream is ruin.

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The moment Russia ceases to be able to borrow in Europe and America, her collapse, at least as a European Power, is inevitable.

The whole history of our intercourse, especially of our recent intercourse, with China calls for a revision of our method of finding outlets for our productions. So far we have acted rather as the big schoolboy, who says to the small schoolboy, "You want to buy my knife; if you don't, I shall lick you." Nor have our exploits of this nature been confined to China. When China practically says, "I don't want your goods, I don't want to have anything to do with you," Europe is hurt and indignant, and says that the Chinese are uncivilized, and must be awed by an exhibition of military force—the one thing which has no moral effect whatever upon the Chinese, however much it may affect the Court, the objective of the attack.

China remains, what she has been for two thousand years, the incarnation of the supreme force of co-operative labour, and when contact is fully established with the West, and China (through Russian or other agency) is finally 'opened up,' M. Ular is confident that she will flood the world with the produce of her superior power of work, representing what is ultimately her superior civilization. In the meantime, if the European powers are impatient to enter China and exploit her as they feel she should be exploited, they can do so in one way and one way only. Having first settled their mutual differences and arranged their 'spheres of interest,' they must make up their minds with the frankness and fearlessness of the Israelites or Crusaders of old to exterminate the population root and branch, and so to put an end to China, the yellow peril and Chinese civilization altogether.

Introduction

THE contemporary history of the Far East, at least as regards its northern section, is no more than the history of the expansion of Russia.

It is a very complicated history and up to the present moment has been regarded as essentially impenetrable because of the variety of its aspects. In the West the system of parliamentary rule, which thinks that every action in external policy must be submitted to public discussion, has had the consequence that any enterprise requiring sustained effort has become impossible, that international relations are settled somewhat from day to day, that no distinction is any longer seen between the immediate action, and the real aim, and that in a word the aspect is identified with the principle. Thus it has been possible to arrive at the statement, that policy, and more especially the policy of Russian expansion, is by nature extremely variable, that it proceeds from case to case, and that it but rarely remembers a reigning fundamental principle.

Nothing is more erroneous. By attentively following, with full knowledge of the case, the evolution of the power of Russia we discover on the contrary a continuity unexampled in modern history, an action patient, powerful, animated with a logical spirit

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of which no other State is capable in our days, an amazing stability of principles, and above all an independence in the employment of temporary means, which is only explained, and only excused by the results, and by the rigorous logic which guides the life of this gigantic organism towards one single, invariable, preconceived, aim.

This, then, is the reason why the proceedings of the Russian Government are generally so ill understood. We forget that it is an oligarchy. We forget that it is a very small number of individualities showing themselves, with some rare exceptions, really superior in respect of will, intelligence, and intuition, who pre-side over the working of the Empire, and who have a strong enough memory to be able to follow windings, cross-roads, and apparently blind alleys, without ever losing sight of the straight road which leads to the end imagined by the instinct for power.

This is the immense advantage of the Russian oligarchy in comparison with the governments of all the other States called civilized.

The necessarily ephemeral currents of opinion which so often reign in the West are there replaced by a time-honoured system based not upon the defective mentality or sentimentality of the masses, but on a rigorous logic. And this logic seems strong enough to allow the determination far in advance, and by formulas of almost mathematical precision, the route to be followed towards a distant aim, an aim indicated, doubtless, by that profound intuition peculiar to real statesmen.

As opposed to the meanness which is manifested in the exterior life of the Western nations, the performances of a small group of men feeling themselves

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strong enough to act *sub specie aeternitatis* and even to assume responsibility for it, afford a spectacle so strangely magnificent, so deliciously out of the ordinary lines, that they seem at times to belong rather to the imagination of romance than the reality of history. And in relating them in their improbable entanglement they seem so much the more extraordinary because they are not lit up by the broad daylight of the events which the European public loves so much to discuss, but in the twilight of intrigues, of secret actions, of confidential missions, of mysterious negotiations, and of evolutions fine to the degree of imperceptibility, which are confined to the sphere of the oligarchs themselves alone, and never come to the knowledge of the people except by accident.

This attempt at an account of the origin and aim of the international action, which, from 1895 to the present day, has constituted what is called the Chinese question, may be considered as an abstract of such accidents.

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I

*Origin and Development of Russo-Chinese Relations up
to the Treaty of Aïgoun (1860)*

THE Asiatic policy of Russia is the indirect consequence of the Crimean war. The disaster of Sebastopol had taught the leaders of the Empire that the Western nations would never consent to open to the Slav world that gate to the sea which has been the dream of all Russian statesmen since Peter the Great. The Russian people, thrown back upon the arid steppes, with their great arteries of communication blocked by the forts of the Dardanelles and the Sound, was to remain a people of indolence in spite of the civilizing propensities of its leaders ; so the Mongols, who have been repeating the same conservative functions without variation for centuries, have been chanting the same songs, in which the ocean is glorified, much as hymns evoke the delights of a heavenly kingdom.

Nicholas I, the strongest will of his time, collapsed at the same time as the venerable dream of his dynasty. He died of grief at seeing his aspirations towards the seas of the West finally brought to nothing.

A younger head was wanted, one more audacious, more full of romance, to venture to imagine what

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pure logic perhaps demanded, but practical reason condemned as a chimera, viz. to abandon the West in order to conquer the Eastern ocean.

At first this was a wild idea, then a fixed idea, lastly a political system. Five years after the Crimean collapse this system was in working order.

The Empire already immense, already formidable if only by the force of its inert weight, began to gravitate towards the Pacific Ocean.

Shores of almost visionary extent already marked the limits to Russian territory in that direction; but these shores were blocked by ice, barren, majestically void, and absurd. However at the very crisis of the defeat in the Crimea these poor shores had been recalled to the memory of the Czar by an act which in the higher circles of Russian society, haunted as it is by romance, was interpreted as the stirring symbol of future greatness.

On these distant shores, where a group of two hundred huts figured as a capital, the Empire saw its solitary days of success during its war against the coalition of the West. The little port of Petropaulovsk had been attacked by a respectable squadron of French and English, which had been forced to give up landing by means of one hundred and fifty soldiers and eight grotesque cannons.

Alexander II, a man extremely sensitive to impressions, saw in this a mystic sign, and from this time forward Siberia passed from the lowest rank among the possessions of the Czar to one of the highest.

Count Muravieff, called later in reward for his services Muravieff-Amourski, had in 1847 been appointed Governor-General of Eastern Siberia with the condolence of St. Petersburg society; his supe-

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rriors had spoken of him as "a queer sort of fellow" who could not keep quiet even in that country, where there was nothing to do ; and now in one moment he became the "thoroughly judicious and extraordinarily gifted" official, who was organizing provinces called to play a leading part in the history of the empire at no distant future.

The fact is that Muravieff had foreseen the necessity of acquiring a free outlet for Russia upon the Pacific ; but, as long as the Czar Nicholas was alive, this idea had made him the laughing-stock of men of the world, the despair of the monarch, and the bugbear of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which dreaded conflicts with China, the immense, the mysterious, even more perhaps than a flare-up with the West. For it must not be forgotten that for two centuries already Russia and China, whose common frontier extended to nearly four thousand miles, had been in continuous and not altogether friendly relations.

In 1644 a band of Cossacks turned the shores of Lake Baikal for the first time, and sped towards the Amour, spreading terror, laying violent hands on the persons and property of the Buriats and Tunguses, believing, as success had attended them everywhere, that they were masters of the country from the Volga to the Angara.

As a matter of fact they were, somewhat in spite of themselves, the pioneers of the great commercial route between Russia and China. The famous market of Kiakhta was founded at this period. But contact with the power of China, so fertile from an economical point of view, was not long in revealing itself as very dangerous from the point of view of politicians.

The savage and superstitious Cossacks, rendered

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timorous by the superior knowledge of the Chinese, felt that they depended on their strength as fighters only, and consequently avoided entering into amicable relations with the population.

A very significant example of this state of affairs was indeed afforded by the foundation of Kiakhtha, which has now become the strongest centre of Russian influence in upper Asia, and at the same time a commercial emporium of the first rank. The Cossacks established this town at a spot as little favoured by nature as possible, while a few leagues off on the right and on the left majestic rivers offered them agricultural and commercial facilities. Their reason was that the Kiakhtha, a little rivulet which dries up every summer, on which they established themselves, rose from springs behind them in their own territory. In fact they were terribly afraid that the learned Buddhist Lamas would poison the big rivers, the Selenga and Chikoï which come from afar, from the centre of Mongolia.

Here the admirable pacific influence of Chinese civilization, the opportunity of acquiring wealth by commerce instead of pillage, quickly made simple tradesmen of the blood-stained horde of invaders, and from that distant time the Russo-Chinese relations at Kiakhtha have never ceased to be most friendly.

Those of the Cossacks, however, who had taken the road to the Amour, finding themselves surrounded by poor and unfriendly populations, could only exist by terror and brute force.

The Tunguses, who had submitted to the Manchu dynasty for nearly a century, applied to their sovereign. But the latter had just overturned the Ming dynasty in China, and was entirely absorbed in the fresh

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organization of the immense empire, governed by his descendants to this day.

For forty years the Cossacks, who were installed upon the Chika, were able to give a free rein to their savage instincts. But when the Chinese Government at last determined to intervene the disaster was complete, and this disaster naturally brought the Government of the Muscovite Empire itself upon the stage, for it could not disavow emissaries who claimed its authority, and were working for its glory.

Under the pressure of China which was threatening to reoccupy the whole of the country beyond Lake Baïkal, where Kiakhta had already become an important commercial centre of considerable utility to Russia, the Czar concluded in 1689 the disastrous treaty of Nertchinsk, which restored the whole of the Amour country to China. The road to the East, where was the ocean, at that time unknown, seemed finally barred.

After this disagreeable experience for more than a century and a half the Russian Government felt a profound aversion from anything which might bring it again into diplomatic relations with China.

The numerous Manchu documents which record the exchange of views between the Chinese Government and the Siberian Governors, show the extreme deference of Russia towards her formidable neighbour. There was a fear that the question of the Amour, raised on different occasions by ambitious generals, might be reopened, and this course was renounced the more easily because the part of the Empire in Europe already supplied too many dangerous entanglements.

When Muravieff, in 1847, took over the government of Eastern Siberia to make of it a field of activity

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worthy of his soaring and adventurous aspirations, he proceeded at once on an expedition towards the ocean, an enterprise all the more daring because the treaty of Nertchinsk had never been cancelled.

He explored the mouth of the Amour, and wrote calmly to his Emperor so say, that he thought he might consider the whole of the country traversed, that is to say the whole left bank of the Amour, as forming part of the Empire.

The Czar fulminated, the chancelleries trembled, but Muravieff was unscathed by the messages of his Government.

Only in 1855 did the Emperor change his opinion on seeing that the Anglo-French fleet was going to threaten the coast of the sea of Okhotsk. Then the Government was compelled to decide in favour of Muravieff, who was at the same time charged to open up negotiations with China on the subject of an exact delimitation of the frontier.

Lastly the victory of Petropaulovsk was decisive for Russian policy in Asia. By establishing Russian colonists along the Amour before a conclusion of the preliminaries with China had taken place, the latter was brought to face an accomplished fact.

And so far from provoking the complications which had been dreaded for centuries this audacity actually introduced the first steps on the road of pacific relations between Russia and China, which were soon to exhibit the extraordinary spectacle of a friendly understanding, and even clandestine tie between the Yellow and White Emperors.

One of the most significant details in the external policy of the Czars is in fact its dexterity in posing as the saviour of the weaker of two antagonists, in order

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thereby to gain the gratitude of the one and to weaken the reputation of the other. This skill, which has never played false since the time of Peter the Great, is in fact no more than turning to the best account the geographical situation of the Empire ; that situation is central ; in all international questions Russia is always the " hinterland " of some one who needs her benevolence, or at least her neutrality.

Russia proceeded exactly in this way in the case in question.

At the very moment when Russia was beginning to raise the question of the Amour, the Manchu dynasty found itself in a far from satisfactory position.

At one and the same time its power was shaken by the war against the Anglo-French coalition, and the Taï-ping insurrection. Tient-sin was (1858) in the hands of the Europeans, Nanking was occupied by the rebels. The dynasty had to reckon with the eventuality of leaving Peking, and taking refuge in a place of security, its native home, Manchuria. But Manchuria had no fixed frontiers in the direction of Russia ; the power of each of the Empires went as far as its military posts.

The interests of the dynasty imperatively demanded that Russia, the " hinterland " of Manchuria, should observe a benevolent neutrality.

Under these conditions Count Muravieff in the month of May, 1858, at the moment when the united forces of the West were bombarding the forts which protect the imperial city, succeeded in concluding the Treaty of Aïgoun, which inaugurated a new phase in the history of the extreme East. Henceforth Russia and China had a common interest in opposing the activity of the maritime Powers. The left bank of

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the Amour was acquired by Russia, which thus became a Pacific Power.

This immense material success assured (thanks to the unconscious collaboration of the Western powers), a still greater moral success entered into the domain of the possible : to gain the friendship of the Manchu dynasty, and demonstrate the Russian supremacy to the Westerns who held it in check.

Under the pretext of getting the Treaty of Aigoun ratified at Peking, Count Ignatieff was sent there by sea in 1859. He arrived at Tient-sin at the moment when the allies were besieging the Chinese capital. It was in consequence impossible for him to enter the town, which endured famine for months longer before recognizing that it was conquered.

At last in the month of September, 1860, one day the southern gate of the besieged monster opened suddenly. But the European commanders in great perplexity, not knowing whether they had to do with a capitulating town or a dangerous snare, did not venture to make use of this opening; on the other hand a failure to move would have been interpreted as a disastrous sign of weakness.

Then Count Ignatieff entered upon the stage, for, sent by his Emperor to ratify a treaty, he said that he could penetrate into the town without danger. He did so, escorted by some Cossacks of his train, was received with great honours by Prince Kung, who represented his brother, the fugitive Emperor, and invited the Chinese Government to enter into negotiations with the enemy.

Naturally his advice was followed, and Russia had rendered an important service at one and the same time both to China and the Anglo-French coalition.

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In comparison with the somewhat equivocal advantages which resulted from these events to England and France, the benefits which accrued to Russia proved themselves real beyond question.

Not only did the Jesuit missionaries, who almost alone at this time vainly sought to propagate the Gospel among the Chinese, heap praises upon Russian diplomacy, but among the great Buddhist dignitaries also, who in the Russian intervention saw with much perspicacity the intention to free China from Western interference, delight was manifested by the sending of a deputation conveying thanks from the Bogdo Guiguen Khou-touk-tou, vicar of the Buddhist pope, resident at Ourga in Mongolia.

And to all these moral successes: gratitude of the dynasty, friendship of the Buddhists, kindly feeling of the Christians, and disparagement of the Western powers, Ignatieff was finally able to add a material success of the highest importance. He made Russia take the first decisive step in her gravitation towards the Pacific by endowing her with a new province, which offered the possibility of exercising practically the part of a maritime power in the Far East.

In November, 1860, he concluded a treaty with Prince Kung, which not only confirmed that of Aïgoun, but further ceded to the Czar the whole Pacific coast from the Amour to the frontiers of Corea: the province of Ussuri which was soon to give birth to the great strategic point of Vladivostok.

Ever since this amicable triumph Russo-Chinese relations, in spite of certain appearances to the contrary, have never ceased to be intimate.

And this intimacy was to bear magnificent fruit in the course of time. On each fresh occasion Russian

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diplomacy knew how to make itself amiable to the Chinese. The patience, the slowness, the refinements in the exchange of ideas, which characterize the statesmen of these two countries alike, the strict compliance of Russia with Chinese usages, the extreme prudence with which she avoids the clumsy fault of the Western diplomatist, that of treating China from a position of superiority, all these things could not fail to engender on the side of the Manchu dynasty a profound confidence in the friendship and honourable character of Russian politicians.

II

*Economic Character of Russian Expansion. Its final
Perspective. Gravitation of the Empire towards
China. The trans-Asiatic Railways*

THROUGHOUT all the windings of Russo-Chinese diplomatic relations from this time onwards the tendency towards maritime power in the Far East became more and more accentuated ; but at the same time its character changed.

Instead of remaining the simple expression of the necessity which bound Russia after the Crimean war to seek other manoeuvring grounds for her vague desires of domination, this tendency became more and more openly the mainspring of the economic development of Russia in Europe.

While in the West political power had a tendency to become identified with economic forces, Russia was still in a condition of profound social decline.

Evidently there was no economic decadence, because an economic life in the Western sense had never existed.

The secular patriarchal system was perhaps sufficient to ensure a tranquil existence to the nobles and the countless serfs, but with such a social order every great initiative towards expansion was bound to end in an absurdity ; as the examples of England and France

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demonstrated, three things were needed, capital, industry and commerce.

Alexander II thought to bring them into being by the emancipation of the serfs. The result was disastrous because the means had been artificial.

There was capital; it was, however, advanced by the State.

There was commerce, but it was profitable only to the foreigner.

There was industry, but it was profitable to nobody; and there was finally a proletariat incapable of working, and sickly.

Russia, in endeavouring to hasten the economic imitation of Europe, presented an appearance of poverty.

Poverty without remedy. On the one hand the recklessness of the nobles who had become capitalists in consequence of their lucrative expropriation, and the idleness of the peasants who had become free but remained ignorant, created incessant famines and depressed the economic force of the country. On the other hand, any expansion towards the West was impossible because of the very superiority of those countries which held Russia, so to say, locked up in her own house.

The ups and downs of the barometer of economic life in Russia were correctly represented by the irregular fluctuations of the Exchange on Russian money, and the formidable financial catastrophe of 1878 showed in the long run that the path upon which her economic life had rushed was a blind alley.

Then came to light a new economic tendency, rendered possible by the acquisition of the Far Eastern provinces and become necessary by the pitiless blockade of the

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West. Russia again felt herself a continental country, perceived that she had almost again become Mongolian. For the rest the impoverished peoples of the interior of the great continent have at all times gravitated towards China. Russia did not take stock of this fact, for stock is not taken of natural evolutions.

Everything, however, concurred to present the Far East as the point of departure for a fresh economic flight. The force which had succumbed in Europe before the superiority of Western civilization had a safe opportunity in Asia against organizations inferior at all points. And the idea of realizing practically the immense fields of property acquired from one end of Asia to the other was certainly an audacious idea, but absolutely logical.

Thus naturally the question of power on the Pacific became an economic question ; and the Russo-Chinese relations from being political became commercial.

This development carried with it a certain number of serious consequences.

First, from the immediate commercial point of view, the establishment of ways of communication on the level of modern needs became an imperative necessity.

Then, from the economic point of view in general, the possession of centres, not simply commercial, but also more productive relatively than the barren countries at the disposal of the Empire, became a necessity from which there was no escape.

Further, from the point of view of Russian influence the extension of the Czar's dominion over immense and rich countries, which should by their productiveness maintain in equilibrium the Russian Colossus so singularly anæmic in Europe, passed from the state of

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a megalomaniac's dream to that of a political project. The English dominion in India became a fixed idea in Russia ; her thoughts began to turn to Northern China.

Moreover, from the point of view of civilization, the peaceful and intimate contact between Russians and Chinese evoked the unexpected problem of an ethnic struggle in which was soon seen a danger not for the Empire, but for Russian nationality.

Lastly, from the political point of view, the entrance of Russia into the phalanx of the mercantile powers made her a rival of the maritime Powers of Europe, and of England in the first place.

The most serious of these new conceptions, that which soon dominated the others to the degree of rendering them simply means to its own realization, was the idea of the expansion of the sphere of influence. But about this there must be no mistake ; purely economic motives are involved at the back of the ideal.

Nobody knows better than the directors of the destinies of Russia that the Empire has long been suffering from a veritable hypertrophy of territory.

Even if we subtract the respectable figure of the millions of square miles which epitomize the existence and all but the life of the northern districts of Siberia, the excess of territory is everywhere revealed by insufficient means of exploitation, and above all by the almost complete absence of the intense popular life which forms the intoxicating charm of India, China and the West. To increase without external compulsion this hypertrophy so dangerous to the vitality of the Empire would be sheer lunacy ; and the strong, cool

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brains which think for this measureless organization have never been a prey to giddiness.

In the case of Russia the remedy for territorial hypertrophy can only be found in the intensification of her life, in the precipitation of the vitalizing elements into circulation, in their increase, in the creation of an unshakable foundation upon which the Empire may be able to live without having to fear unforeseen accidents. This basis must be of an economic nature ; and it is worth while to seek in Asia this foundation which was sought in Europe, and has there been lost in a fashion which is probably final.

At this point we call to mind the story, so often repeated in the course of ages, of other peoples who, seeking a stable economic basis, turned towards the East, coveted and finally conquered that inexhaustible source of wealth and well-being, China ; and having conquered her allowed themselves to be absorbed by her.

Four times in the course of history a similar event has happened, and that not to any chance comers.

If the absorption of the Naïmans by China has remained somewhat obscure, if that of the people which gave the Leao dynasty to China does not as yet seem very exceptional, the third, the absolute disappearance of the Mongol forces in the human ocean of the Middle Empire must always be to us a source of amazement. We see emperors, perhaps the strongest individuals that are shown to us by the chronicles of any times, disposing of the combined resources of the whole of Asia, almighty, if this word can ever be applied to human beings, who after interminable struggles command this immense and undying nation, to use it as they please, to annex it, to make it the economic dependency

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of their Empire destined to furnish them with the means necessary to the realization of other designs : and we see that slowly, irresistibly this tranquil nation, with its stultified appearance, enclasps in the tentacles of its economic superiority all the other parts of the Empire and the strongest heroes along with them. Neither force, nor guile, nor laws, nor intrigues stop this centralizing movement.

China, without ceasing to be herself, draws everything to herself, drowns everything in herself, and here is the astounding evolution which history offers to our contemplation—

Tchengis Khan attacks and conquers China ; Euguetaï organizes it from his new residence, Kara Korum in Mongolia ; Khubla-Khan is compelled, in order to exercise his power profitably, not only to learn Chinese, but further to reside on the immediate frontiers of China ; his son no longer speaks but in Chinese, no longer dresses but in the Chinese fashion, resides nowhere except at Peking, and his successors become completely Chinese, become nonentities as individuals, are no longer anything more than the degenerate descendants of a great line, and see themselves invested and deposed at the pleasure of their ministers. Lastly, a symbol of profound significance, a Chinese peasant, the incarnation of all the qualities of his race, sweeps away in an agricultural revolution the dynasty and the people which fifty years earlier issued orders on the Black and Yellow Seas and to the Arctic and the Indian Oceans.

The same tragedy is repeated at the present time with the Tsing dynasty, which with its whole people from Manchu became Chinese to such an extent that its primitive tongue has passed into the condition of

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a dead language. And this people none the less claims to govern the third part of humanity.

The same danger, in a different degree of course, awaits whosoever seeks in China the economic dependency of an Empire in a state of hypertrophy.

Now Russia does seek this with full knowledge at the present moment after a long period of mistrustful groping. She cannot do otherwise. This is not the simple seduction which formerly brought the Mongol Empire to its ruin; it is logical necessity, an offshoot from economic necessity.

But the realization of such a project is far away. Over and above the relentless economic reasons the drainage of the immense treasures of Northern China to Russia will not be possible for a long while yet; and on another side she cannot fling herself headlong upon this prey before being sure of having the power to turn it to a profit; a country which it is proposed to make an integral part of a system is not taken by assault; it is acquired.

The immediate and essential aim of Russia could then only be to maintain imposing forces in the Far East which would smooth away the obstacles to the execution of the projects of expansion.

It is important to insist on the point that Russia is not seeking by any means a commercial conquest in the Far East similar to that which Great Britain won in India.

The real motive force of Russian activity in Asia is at bottom the incorporation in the Czar's Empire of the provinces of Chi-li, Shan-si,* Shen-si, Kan-suh, and Sze-tchouen. These are countries which not only nourish the most industrious population in the whole

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world, but further hold enormous inexhaustible quantities of the three materials which will for a long time yet make the wealth and power of nations—coal, iron, and wood for manufacturing paper.

It would be superfluous to discourse upon the probable exhaustion of the West and America. It is sufficient to note that sooner or later this exhaustion will take place in order to understand the meaning of the activity of Russia inaugurated "*sub specie saeculorum*."

Just as Li-hung-chang, when questioned in 1895 as to the reasons which prevented the exploitation of the immense mineral wealth of his country, dryly answered, "We are waiting till you have no more," so the few Russian statesmen who have ventured to conceive the distant end which is the ultimate aim of their policy say that their conduct, apparently unreasonable for the present, will ensure universal dominion to the Empire in the distant future—a dominion before all things economic.

Such a motive is totally different from that which seems to be indicated by the present official policy of the Empire. It is almost the direct opposite of those by which the other Western Powers are guided in the Far East.

Russia does not hope to find in China fresh outlets for the produce of her industry, but, on the contrary, fresh centres of industrial productiveness.

In this sense the first and most urgent need was the establishment of direct communications between the metropolis and the new future centres of national activity. England had taught the lesson that commerce comes first, that industry is born next, and that political supremacy is the end. Thus germinated the

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idea of the Trans-Siberian railway, the future channel for the drainage of Northern China. For in order to arrive gradually at the amalgamation of Chinese industry with Russian agriculture, first of all a great commercial route was needed, which should become at a later period, as it were, the vertebral column of the transformed Empire.

It was necessary to put this project into execution all the more quickly because the rapid commercial flight of the Western Powers threatened to anticipate Russia in the very sphere which she coveted.

We see then a fresh motive entering into the shaping of the reasons of which Russia had to take stock in her policy—rivalry with the West, a secondary motive it is true, but one which forced her to hurry on the execution of provisional enterprises destined to prepare her sure paths for the future towards the real aim which she held before her.

Advances were made with a haste hitherto unknown in the management of Russian affairs towards the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway.

By avoiding as far as possible all complicated constructions, by skilfully turning the difficulties of the ground ; by authorizing deviations cheaper than the direct road, by only laying a single pair of rails almost without ballast, and just sufficing to carry light trains at a contemptible rate of speed without too much risk ; lastly, by giving the whole construction a provisional character which would remain to be remedied at a more favourable moment, the iron road was built in a short time and at a very small expense over a distance of more than three thousand miles as far as Irkutsk.

But for the section from Lake Baïkal to the Pacific

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and more especially to Vladivostok, a section of almost the same length, there did not seem to be any particular hurry. In fact the execution of this, the most important part of the line, was impossible for reasons of international policy, reasons of Western jealousy.

In fact, it was impossible to think of establishing a line except on Russian territory.

Now the Russian frontier touched the River Amour which flows through an immense country, barren, almost uninhabited, without any economic utility, whose banks form for some hundreds of miles a defile, which only admits a path for the use of beasts of burden.

Was this unprofitable and costly line to be constructed, above all, when Vladivostok, the natural terminus, is more than six hundred miles in a southerly direction from the Amour ?

As is shown by the map, the deviation from the straight line would have been enormous. But in order to gain credit for the honesty of the plan rather than to meet an economic demand, above all to mask secret hopes which were bound one day of necessity to be realized, the Ussuri line at least was built running from Vladivostok to Khabarovka on the Amour; and Europe was made to believe that for the time the Amour was held to be sufficient as the route for the rest of the distance.

As a matter of fact two other plans were in existence. By these the expansive designs of Russia are revealed as openly as possible. Their execution constitutes one of the most interesting episodes in the contemporary history of the Far East. Their principle is far more ancient.

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One consisted of the construction of the Manchurian line, at this moment completed. This plan has never been anything but a second best. Neither the Government, nor those chiefly interested, the Siberian merchants, have ever considered it an enterprise of economic importance. This line has only a provisional strategic interest. Its termini on the Pacific and the Yellow Sea are almost without communication with the centres of Chinese industry ; this is not the dreamed of channel of drainage. Chinese produce for transportation to Europe for this line would have to break bulk twice even before reaching the terminus, from truck to boat, and from boat to truck, which would cause considerable loss of time and money.

The second plan consists in giving Russia a line of her own uniting her Manchurian system with the central provinces of China, or at least with Tientsin. And even in this case the economic difficulties would remain. For the sea-transport from Tientsin to Europe would cost, even assuming a minimum tariff upon the Russian railway, nearly half the price of the land transport, and would not take much longer than the immense march of merchandise through Manchuria and Siberia, making a round of nearly two thousand miles, and crossing nearly four thousand miles of a country which will never be a selling market. The Manchurian route is of such slight commercial importance that it is completely ignored even by those most interested, the business men of Kiakhta. They do not reckon upon proceeding to the smallest change in the organization of their trade. The costs of transport by railway would be so considerable, the difficulties of transferring goods—above all tea—from the Imperial canal to the terminus of the line

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would be so great, and the gain in time so small (nearly a fortnight), that there will always be a decided advantage in transporting the merchandise of the central provinces in junks by river and canal to Kalgan, and from thence on camels or in bullock carts across Mongolia by Ourga to Kiakhtha, whence it is sent direct to Lake Baikal. The Manchurian railway has never been intended to be anything but a basis of political influence in China and a pretext for ousting any competition from other powers.

The final project, conceived the first, but whose execution is far from being completed, is that of the trans-Mongolian line from Baikal to Pekin by Kiakhtha, Ourga and Kalgan, which would cross the richest and most industrious districts of China. That is the drainage-channel of the dreams, and the mere fact of the conception shows the general intentions of the Russian Government.

In Asia, however, the first condition for the construction of a railway of effective interest is the uncontested possession of the country. And this is evidently the reason why Russia has been obliged to proceed upon her enterprises in the manner in which she has done.

The character of Russian action in the Far East is thereby clearly established. It is economic expansion with the aim of finding in Northern China the economic basis of the Empire. Were it not proved by facts, we should hesitate to believe the words of the statesmen who for their part have not hesitated to declare it with an exquisite levity.

What, however, is still more astonishing than the embarkation upon a plan so vast and so thorny is the truly amazing fact that the continuous and, so

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to say, forced encroachment of Russia upon the rights of the Chinese Government has never been able to disturb the friendly relations between the two Governments and the two peoples.

III

Causes of the Russo-Chinese Intimacy. Popular Intimacy on the Frontiers : Atavism, Commerce. Political Intimacy : difficult internal Position of the Manchu Dynasty. The common Enemy : the West

THIS curious phenomenon is of supreme importance for the comprehension of the history of the Far East in general ; thus we believe ourselves bound to give at this point a statement of its causes.

We may say to begin with that the strange intimacy of the popular Russo-Chinese relations is the quite natural consequence of the ethnic character of the two great nations.

We have been so much accustomed in the West to count the Russians and with them the Great Russians, the dominant branch of the family, among the peoples of Europe, that in the end they have come to believe it themselves, and that when we maintain the contrary view, and venture to draw deductions of an historical nature from the statement, we are exposed to the risk of becoming the laughing-stock of the ignorant.

None the less the Great Russians are more Mongols than Slavs, the word Slav signifying at the outside, if it is insisted that there are Slavs, a race of the nature

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of the Little Russians, who differ from the Great Russians as much as the French differ from the English.

Further, the history of Eastern Europe teaches us that for more than three centuries the Mongols not only inhabited but also ruled the country ; and it would be absurd to suppose that with the fall of their political supremacy this stationary people, mingled with the aborigines for ten generations, disappeared.

Numerous other peoples of the Finno-Mongol race, to begin with the ancient Bulgarians from the Ural, amalgamated with the Russians ; Turkish populations did the same, even to the Cossacks, who are still in our own days Turks in type, intelligence, manners, occupations, organization, and Russians solely by the language imposed by the Sovereign. In fine, countless mixtures of races accomplished in the course of centuries have made of the Great Russian something quite distinct from the pure European.

The ancestry of both races is complex, but it can hardly be doubted that the Great Russian has quite as much of the Mongol in his composition as the Chinaman.

It might seem rash to draw an analogy in character from this fact ; it is, however, certain that this analogy exists.

The placid conception of life which characterizes the two peoples, as indeed for that matter the majority of those whose fusion has formed them, was specially suited to facilitate the relations between them, and it must not be forgotten that the lasting ties between the two nations were first established by Cossacks, men of Turco-Mongolian race, with features to some extent akin to those of the Mongols of the Far East.

The profound ties of relationship which can be looked for between Russians and Chinese have for

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that matter often served statesmen, and even ordinary citizens on the two sides, to express with some coquetry the necessity of good mutual relations.

Thus when Li-hung-chang was at Moscow in 1895, a Russian prince made a little speech after dinner, in which he expressed his pleasure at seeing intimate relations established between the two peoples; and Li-hung-chang replied textually as follows:—

“I feel the congratulations of your Highness very deeply, and I do not hesitate to see the guarantee for a perpetual friendship between our peoples in the mysterious ties of an ancient kinship.”

Such words are a little more than a mere politeness, above all if they are repeated countless times when Russians and educated Chinese discuss general questions, or pay one another complimentary visits. They tend in any case to prove that there is faith in this relationship.

But it is evident that the development of the popular relations has done much more in the course of time than this affinity itself to engender the good mutual understanding which is now maintained.

Since the existence of these relations, that is to say for two and a half centuries, they have never ceased to be overshadowed by a fact, negligible in appearance, but acquiring supreme importance when we state that it has never existed in the relations of the Chinese with any other European people.

Russia has always communicated with the Chinese by land and never by sea.

In communication by land mutual penetration is infinitely more considerable, contact infinitely closer, mutual infiltration immediately possible.

And we see that for ethnic or other reasons the

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Russian, like the Chinese, knows of infiltration alone as a method of expansion, of emigration, of colonization.

When the Cossacks of Trans-baikalia had once been tamed—taking on a Chinese rather than a Russian civilization—by the assimilating force of lucrative exchange, the Russians who followed them on one side, and the Chinese who met them on the other, immediately began that intense trading which looks for sound business and leads to intimacy.

Constant work in common, the habit of seeing one another, speaking to one another, of dealing with the business between the one nation and the other, little though it seems to be an international affair at first sight, the security and confidence derived from the fact that the neighbour is established close by in a final manner, that he has become sedentary, that he has the same local interests—for local interests form stronger bonds than country or nation or humanity—all this together concurred to create Russo-Chinese populations, in which each nation preserved its peculiarities, but each dealt with the other as equal with equal on the basis of common interests. To this must be added the necessity of mutual comprehension, imperative in continental relations, by learning the language of neighbours, by finding spheres of understanding, by forming (as at Kiakhta) an intermediary language drawn from those of the two peoples in contact, in short, by introducing a harmony of mind.

Thus mutual knowledge of habits, faith, beliefs, prejudices, institutions, usages, languages and needs tends to create a kind of harmony between populations, which becomes of the highest importance where

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relations are no longer restricted solely to the frontier zone.

The Russian, whether he hails from Kiakhta or Archangel or Sebastopol, for the Chinese of Maï-matchin (the Chinese town of Kiakhta) of Canton, or Pekin, will always be the Russian, and he is identified with his Russian friend at Kiakhta ; thus he will always be something of a friend.

Whether the Russians of St. Petersburg hate or despise the Chinese of Pekin, whether the Chinese of Suchau hate or despise the Russians of Odessa is a matter of absolute indifference among healthy populations not yet corrupted by the benefits of international relations in the European style.

In Europe, in fact, France and Germany have no relations, as peoples, except between Paris and Berlin ; artificial relations exaggerated, grotesquely swollen out of shape by the misleading microscopes of the press, while real popular relations between Germans and Frenchmen, such as take place on the frontiers, hardly exist.

In Asia the contrary is the case. The peoples touch one another on the frontiers, and not by the two ends of a telegraphic wire, which is so much the more mendacious as it is utilized only by interested parties.

That is why the example of certain market towns lost in the length of a frontier of nearly 4,000 miles has been able to influence in the most felicitous way the mental condition of enormous masses of population.

Over and above these natural conditions the degree of internal civilization, perceptibly identical on both sides, has largely contributed to the surprising friendship between Russians and Chinese.

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In the different branches of trade each nation has learned from the other. The means of transport, the means of communication were nearly the same. The Chinese who travelled on Russian territory, the Russians who travelled on Chinese territory, had the same inconveniences to put up with, and the same pleasures to enjoy. The manifest equality of external conditions could not fail to engender moral equality, esteem. And esteem, which has here become the very basis of a common life, became the most powerful and most precious source of friendship.

Russians and Chinese, who have only to cross a common frontier in a single step to meet one another, understand one another, must understand one another, and will always end by understanding one another, as neighbours. Their intimacy is natural, strong, and with their easy-going character in a kind of way unshakable ; they are not violent enough, nor sensitive enough to quarrel seriously.

If this popular friendship between Russians and Chinese is plausible and in any case easy to be explained by the natural development of international trade on the frontier, the undisputed diplomatic friendship which has been without a check since the treaty of Aïgoun in 1860 seems far stranger.

The rapid and irresistible expansion of the sphere of Russian influence on territories formerly tributary to the Chinese Empire ought rather to have provoked a secret but violent antagonism between the two Governments.

The fact that the contrary has happened is due to two causes : first, the tottering position of the Manchu dynasty in its principal country, China proper ; then the

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common necessity of facing a common enemy, the West.

The first of these two causes is explained by the nationality of the reigning dynasty, the Tsings. It is a usurping and foreign dynasty. It came to dominate the body of functionaries by a series of compromises which will be characterized later on.

Its direct influence upon the nation is infinitesimal ; and nothing is more erroneous than to believe that the dynasty actually holds in China a power similar, for example, to that of the Czars in Russia.

In China the Manchu Court is one thing, the life of the Chinese nation is another ; and the body of officials, intermediary between the two, only submits to the dynasty in so far as the latter disposes of promotion by the complicity of the immense number of aspirants.

The dynasty rests administratively upon intrigue, as it rests historically upon a military usurpation supported by an interested clergy.

For this reason it must not be identified with China. It might disappear, and the enormous administrative machine, of which it seems to be the mainspring, would continue to work without its being possible to report a derangement of the smallest of its wheels. It might be overthrown, and, except for the tears of courtiers and leaders of intrigues, who would be called members of the Government in Europe, there would be no reason to dread any violent change in the fortunes, the habits, the opinions, or the activity of the Chinese.

For the dynasty has no links with the Chinese people. It has become Chinese in usages, in spirit, in customs, and almost in race and language ; but the people of its origin has become so along with it. The Manchus have disappeared ; Manchu is a dead lan-

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guage, or nearly so ; and thus the power of the dynasty is devoid of any solid foundation.

Now it is necessary that it should appear powerful in the eyes of the nation ; it is necessary that the nation should believe in its irresistible strength, and be led to the conviction that it owes the good conditions of its internal life to the activity of the dynasty ; otherwise the dynasty would not stand against the slightest shock.

And as the dynasty sees very clearly into this precarious situation (all its internal policy, which it would be out of place to set forth here, is evidence of this), it is logically led to sacrifice a part of its glory, of its greatness, and of the wealth of the Chinese Empire to its own existence as a Manchu placeman.

Moreover it can proceed to sacrifices of this nature with so much the greater ease because in China local and economic reasons prevail absolutely over the general considerations which we call patriotic or political ; the dynasty, and with it the policy of the Empire, soars so high above the things in life which are capable of stirring the crowd, that the gravest transactions, the most fateful decisions, the most important actions can be perpetrated without attracting the notice of the nation ; always provided that one condition is observed, the maintenance of the stability of its economic comfort.

The situation of the Manchu dynasty in China is then somewhat that of the worthy citizen who swaggers on 'Change or at his club, and at home effaces himself completely before the unavowed but effective supremacy of a cunning or shrewish wife.

Under these conditions the friendship of the great neighbour of the north was bound to be the more

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precious because the events of 1858 might always recur, and, on the other side, the Russian Government, since the Ignatieff treaty, had exhibited a somewhat unusual disinterestedness.

Russia's most skilful procedure to captivate the Manchu dynasty was without doubt the policy which she followed at the time of the Mohammedan revolts in Chinese Turkestan in 1879. At that time the exactions of the mandarins in the district of Kuldja, conterminous with Russian Turkestan, had provoked sanguinary risings against which the Chinese troops had been powerless ; and the inhabitants, desirous of enjoying the relative liberty of their neighbours and withdrawing themselves from reprisals on the part of the Chinese, offered the protectorate over their country to the Czar. The latter was hardly in a position to refuse, for refusal would have been interpreted as a sign of weakness. The Russians administered the district of Kuldja for nearly two years. But the population was difficult to drive, the utility of the increase of territory seemed to be non-existent, and when at last the Chinese Government took steps to regulate the position of the province, Russia offered to restore it to China, an offer which was naturally accepted with eagerness, and added to the cordiality of mutual relations.

At the same period Russia sent her first great official commercial mission into China. Sustained and protected by the Chinese Government, it crossed not only Mongolia, but also Honan, and Kan-suh, and returned to Siberia by the ancient so-called Imperial route which leads from Lanchau to Kuldja by Hami and Urumtsi.

The mission endeavoured to conclude a commercial

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treaty, but this proved to be impracticable in consequence of the absence of adequate means of communication over and above the caravan route from Kiakhta to Kalgan.

While the two Governments were thus working to draw together (it is true for very different reasons) there was another reason an indirect one but a much stronger one, which was compelling them to come to an understanding; viz., the progress of the common adversary, the maritime Powers of the West with whom Japan was soon to unite.

Russia was bound to look at the growing importance of the relations between China and the West with eyes that were not only jealous, but anxious to boot.

From her point of view, necessarily selfish, the maritime powers were not Christian sisters, European kindred, who were carrying to the Far East their merchandise, their religion and their Western civilization; they were rivals, who were setting to work to exploit a domain which Russia would have liked to reserve to herself up to the moment when she herself would have been able to throw all her strength into this profitable undertaking.

They were more than rivals, for Russia was pursuing in the Far East aims otherwise great, enterprises otherwise important, actions otherwise essential to her future fortunes than those of the commercial states of the West.

These last sought trade, industry, above all, money, and if they made any effort to acquire a civilizing, religious or political influence, it was only in the measure necessary to secure the most brilliant realization possible for their commerce.

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But Russia could not seek either trade or money as a general rule, and her civilizing influence was bound to be so much the more insignificant because in presence of the secular equality, from her point of view, established between the two Empires, as well as between the two peoples, the Government would never have thought of utilizing it in view of the realization of its plans.

She looked always for infiltration, that slow but irresistible colonizing process which seems to her the peculiar gift of her nation ; she wanted, in one word, to gain time, and yet again time ; that is to say, to oust Western activity from the domain which one day she would herself colonize.

The Westerns in China were not only rivals but enemies, whose eventual success endangered the future of the Russian combinations, a future of which, it may freely be admitted, they knew or cared very little.

And the most terrible thing of all was that Russia could not before several decades had passed make any display of her anxiety in this direction. The Westerns would only have made the greater haste to assure to themselves economic advantages in China, which would have rendered the distant hopes of Russia illusory.

But the safety of Russia and China, and the defeat of the West lay in this, that Russia could oppose to the West the immense resistant force of the Chinese Empire itself.

For that purpose she had only to prove to the dynasty that by leaning on her support it would find a more stable basis than in buying by successive grave concessions the immediate goodwill of the Westerns, which changed into insatiable greed as

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soon as the dynasty had to meet internal difficulties.

It was not difficult to demonstrate this. Since the Westerns had taken to coming to China they had always been the most powerful, the most perfidious, the most skilful support of all the anti-dynastic movements which had been raised against the Ta-Tsing Manchus. At each fresh difficulty their pretensions had increased. Taking advantage of the Tai-ping revolution they had come to besiege the capital, and had forced the dynasty to allow to be imposed upon the Chinese people the importation of that hideous poison, opium, which was forbidden, but the sale of which was able to enrich the English who cultivated it in India by hundreds of millions of francs a year; and the Tai-ping revolution itself was at bottom nothing but the work of the Westerns, a work which they were to try to renew in 1896 under the ægis of the traitor Prince Kang-you-Wei! Christian priests who had taught Chinese writing to unclean populations furnished them even with the title of their new Empire, "Tien-Kouo, Celestial Empire"—a title which has never existed except in the imagination of Christians, which is absurd in Chinese, and has never designated the Chinese Empire, which is called Tchong-Kouo, Empire of the Middle, or, on occasions, Tien-hsia, Lower Heaven.

Over and above the numerous unpleasantnesses caused to the dynasty directly, there was this other phenomenon of a much more immediate gravity, which consisted in the growing discord between the Manchu dynasty and the people of China.

In proportion as the dynasty assailed by Western diplomacy saw itself compelled to grant privileges

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to the commercial and religious missionaries of Europe, the more it was exposed to being accused by its own people of feebleness and anti-patriotism, accusation so much the more plausible because the dynasty was non-Chinese. For from the beginning the Chinese people considered the Westerns its worst enemies.

And here we touch on the second spring which moves the gigantic machinery of the drama which is called "the Chinese question." The first, the most powerful and the most durable has been Russia's need for expansion; the second, the most impetuous, is the xenophobia of the Chinese.

The Manchu dynasty was to reckon with the dread of Europe felt by the Chinese people. This is for it evidently a question of life or death, and there are reasons for believing that it would far prefer the embarrassing friendship of the Western Cabinets and internal tranquillity to the incessant conflicts occasioned by differences between the Chinese people and Europeans.

Being obliged in any case to defend the Chinese in accordance with their own sentiments, it is exposed, owing to the xenophobia of its subjects, to the hostility of the European Governments, an immediate and palpable hostility, which does not surprise anybody.

The hostility of the Chinese Government to the West evidently could not but serve the Russian Empire, and this latter in its own interest, far more than in the interest of the Ta-Tsing Dynasty, was bound in all reason to be the good Asiatic with China while continuing to be the good European with the others.

So then in a general fashion Russia and China

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found a common interest in mistrusting the West. And this interest was bound to be manifested by common action as soon as the West endangered both the existence of the Manchu dynasty and the realization of the Russian projects of expansion.

Now such a moment was destined inevitably to occur as the Western powers committed themselves more and more deeply to the practice of intermeddling in Chinese economy.

The expansion of commercial and religious missions was bound to disturb Russia ; the growing intensity of the popular sentiments of xenophobia was bound to put the dynasty in the dilemma of choosing between deference to foreigners and deference to the wishes of the people.

In fact in China, whatever may be said on the subject, the people is everything and the Government nothing. And the hatred of the Western is consequently the actual source of all the difficulties which constitute the Chinese question so far as it concerns the aspirations of the European peoples. This curious psychical phenomenon, which is of an importance as general for the future of Europe as for that of the Chinese, must necessarily be explained, and so much the more because without this preliminary inquiry the march of Chinese affairs would remain totally incomprehensible.

IV

The Principles of Chinese Civilization. Co-operative Production. The Credit System. Syndicates of Workers. The Empire as a Co-operative of Co-operatives

IT is evident that between the man of the West and the Chinese there is a fundamental difference. But that does not explain the absolute incompatibility of their manners of acting, of feeling, of living ; it does not explain the hatred which is almost as strong on the side of the European as on the Chinese side, and is further seasoned on both sides with a strong dash of the poison of unjustifiable contempt.

One cause of this hatred may be seen in the geographical conditions which preside over Sino-Occidental relations, and are totally different from those which regulate Russo-Chinese relations.

If we recall the manner in which the curious popular friendship between Russians and Chinese was formed on the Siberian frontier, we can imagine that the contrary of these conditions must entail the reverse of friendship.

Undoubtedly one essential point is that the West entered into relations with the Chinese nation not by way of the land, as did Russia, but exclusively by the

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way of the sea. Thus there has been neither mutual penetration nor even infiltration.

He who arrives by the sea remains in every condition of affairs a foreigner, a foreigner who comes without avowable intentions, for it is not natural to come alongside the shore of an unknown country. The foreigner who comes by sea wants something ; he who crosses a land frontier may do so from accidental circumstances ; further, a land frontier is not a serious boundary. But the sea separates, and he who crosses it has reasons for so doing. Either he is exiled from his own country and no longer finds in it the means of livelihood, or he comes with the aims of a brigand. In the first case, when he comes peacefully and with a humble demeanour, he is at least suspected, for he has been driven from his own home. In the second case he is an enemy to be repelled.

But there is a third possibility ; the foreigner arrives peacefully, but not with humility ; he seeks then advantages in peaceful relations because he is too weak to make war.

This form of reasoning is applied by all peoples to the colonists who establish themselves among them ; for the European of our own time it has the disadvantage of being absolutely just.

These foreign friends then want something, and they want it to the detriment of the invaded country, for he who comes by sea, also returns by sea ; he hardly ever stays ; he goes back and sends other friends ; the mutual acquaintance of the peoples concerned is thus impossible.

And in the rare cases in which this acquaintance is sought, it remains superficial or mistaken, for the strangers who come and go constitute the least stable

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class of their own people, the adventurous class ; and these same strangers who come with special interests, are even thereby induced to interpret the life, the habits, the civilization, the soul of the people, which they visit, from the point of view of their own interests, and in a fashion so much the less just because they are in no way qualified for this purely scientific work.

The judgements which the Westerns generally pass upon China are all stained with this constitutional defect.

Missionaries in bondage to the strongest prejudices and the most fiercely powerful interests ; merchants in thrall to the prejudices, the middle-class habits of the West, and guided by their paramount devotion to business ; diplomats whose minds are topsy-turvy even in the West, and whose mission is to represent, *to be*, the foreigners ; these are the principal sources from which Western information is derived.

And the fact that Russian verdicts upon China are, in the immense majority of cases, strangely different from those of other Europeans makes absolutely in favour of the view which holds that exclusively industrial relations render intimacy almost unrealizable.

If already on the European side, where we pride ourselves on our impartiality and scientific spirit, this awkward state of affairs reveals itself with such crudeness, it is not difficult to form a picture of the state of mind of the Chinese brought face to face with the Transoceanian !

In the first instance there will be extreme mistrust, which will soon change to hatred in cases of unpleasant experience. There will be in the second instance a

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comparison, which, if it is to the disadvantage of the stranger, as is only natural, will create a contempt mitigated solely by interest.

Now the Chinese, who call the Westerns Si-yang-jen, men of the Western Ocean (a term which has never before these recent years been applied to the Russians), express even thereby that they feel themselves confronted with a double point of view of mistrust and comparison. And the relations continued for more than half a century have brought about among the Chinese, in consequence of an interminable series of unpleasant experiences with the Si-yang-jen, a feeling of hatred, and as the result of a comparison of the civilization of the invaders with their own, a profound contempt for the Christian and commercial nations of the West.

In order to understand this xenophobia thoroughly it is then important first to recapitulate the great lines of Chinese civilization, and then the unhappy experiences which it has undergone in coming into contact—above all, religious and commercial contact—with Western civilization. In this way will be discovered the immediate causes which have brought on the crisis of the present moment.

As compared with Western civilization, which is consummated in the political organization, Chinese civilization is summed up almost entirely in the creation of a social system established on an economic basis. And as the West, in bringing itself into contact with China, has acted, above all, with economic aims, it has found itself in consequence face to face with the very foundation of Chinese civilization.

This civilization is the product of a continuous

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social development. Our Western history only appears interesting to us by its numberless catastrophes, the destructive shocks, the palpitating cataclysms, the grandiose and ridiculous epics, which have afflicted and almost filled the lives of the peoples called civilized.

Now in China nothing of that kind seems to have happened, or rather the few revolutions consigned to the annals of the Emperors have hardly ruffled the unalterable continuity of the social evolution.

And that is the reason why in the West we are convinced that Chinese history is empty and bare of interest. In fact, we do not dare understand that the great nation of the Far East has a social history, and hardly any political history, while we for our part have only a political history, and at the very outside an embryo of social history.

It is not easy to express in a formula the explanation of this fundamental difference. But it will suffice, at least in order to get a clear insight into the entanglements of Chinese social life, to recall the fact that in the West social life depends at every moment upon the life of States, while in China it depends exclusively and in a continuous fashion upon a philosophical principle of which it is nothing more than the concrete manifestation.

This is the point where the social superiority of the Chinese is enthroned ; the principle is manifested naturally ; it has not been *applied* by legislators. Even its existence escapes observation, so thoroughly has it entered into the mental constitution of the people for thousands of years.

It would be natural to believe in consequence that nothing could be easier than to seek out this principle,

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to explain it, and to follow its manifestation throughout the social organization of this unique race.

But the prejudices on the subject of China are so deeply rooted that everybody is still persuaded that the Chinese nation is dead because it is based upon an immovable and ridiculous family authority.

Now this is false.

The patriarchal system, which certainly did exist among the Chinese, as elsewhere, was transformed as many as three dozen centuries ago ; first, in assuming the character of individual capitalism, such as reigns with undisputed authority among ourselves ; then in developing itself, in consequence of the necessity of the association of small fortunes, in the path of co-operative production, such as is observed among them at the present hour.

This transformation would evidently have been impossible if, as the majority of Europeans stubbornly imagine, the family and the family organization governed, or rather stereotyped, the system of civilization in China.

In reality the philosophical principle which symbolizes social life among them has a scope which is otherwise considerable.

For the Chinese is a symbolist. His language, his syntax, his writing force him to be so ; or rather if he were not so, he would have neither his language, nor his writing, nor, still less, his special turn of mind.

Thus the patriarchal or matriarchal family, as it existed in former times, a primitive and natural association, appeared to him as the symbol of a universal principle, as the symbol of the relations generally possible inside groups of individuals.

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Now in the family reduced to its simplest expression, in the group which is composed of the man, the woman and the child, the Chinese observe three relations : that between the parents and the child, that between the man and the woman, and that between the person who at a given moment directs, and the person who submits to direction.

In a more general manner the Chinese observes three categories in the family system, which will become by enlargement a social system : that of associates by natural logic, that of associates by sentiment, that of associates by co-operation of wills. These three relations, creators of one sex with creators of the other, friends with friends, directors with directed, contain all the positions which an individual can occupy in a group. And the position of each individual will be in reality defined in the group by these categories ; each individual has his place at one and the same time in each of them. Everybody has creators alike physical and intellectual ; everybody has affections ; everybody finds himself involved in the machinery of the director and directed. And far more than this, outside all these relations nobody has anything or is anything.

And it is here that, with a sublime inspiration, the Chinese sees in this triple determinant the corollary of the three dimensions of physical space ; and he notes, with the exultation of a metaphysician, that social life fills a social space, as material objects fill the space of three dimensions which surround us.

The Three Relations thus acquired an almost mathematical value, and a philosopher who had already conceived the principles of analytical geometry twenty-five centuries ago, sixty generations before

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Descartes, ventures to give expression to the prodigious idea that the Three Relations constitute the co-ordinates which fix the place of man in social space.

From this precise conception of society to the construction of a determinate ideal there is not even a further step. The idea of perfection in itself was bound to suffice to put this ideal in evidence.

The perfect man, from the social point of view, can only be the man who does not favour one of the Three Relations to the detriment of the others ; or, in other terms, who knows how to maintain himself in perfect equilibrium in the midst of the throng of logical, sentimental or dynamic obligations by which he is assailed.

(And if all the members of society reached this supreme standard, their whole would form, the three co-ordinates remaining always equal for each member, exactly a sphere, and . . . there we have the perfect organism !)

It is before all things curious that this theory is not, as is the rule with European philosophies, an intellectual game destined to furnish matter for idle discussions to other metaphysicians, but that it is in real truth the abstract formula symbolizing the collectivity of forces which vivifies now to-day, as it has done for thirty centuries, the admirable and gigantic co-operative organization of Chinese society.

The Chinese ignores even the possibility of what we call politics. For him everything which has connexion with the life of society assumes an economic character, and the secret associations which from time to time seem to play the part of our revolutionary parties in China never pursue a social aim, but exclusively the realization of individual ideas prompted

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by personages interested in the march of dynastic affairs, and capable of bringing suggestion to bear upon the masses.

It is permitted to erect into a sociological law the observation that among all peoples the intensity of gregarious instincts is in direct ratio with the mean susceptibility of their members to suggestion.

The sometimes irresistible force of the Chinese secret societies, based solely upon a mystic rapture, and by no means upon the logic or self-interest of their members, proves that in China the susceptibility of the masses to suggestion is incomparable, even though we should refuse to recognize in the whole social organization of the nation, and notably in the doctrine of the Three Relations, an expression of this nervous peculiarity of the race.

It is then evident that in the cases in which economic considerations, which in reality epitomize the social spirit of the Chinese, are seconded by gregarious suggestion, there will come into being economic associations of an internal cohesiveness unexampled in the West.

Common interest associated with gregarious instincts is manifested as economic solidarity; and this phenomenon is in fact at once the origin, the cause and the aim of the economic syndicates of which Chinese society is only the sum.

These immense and powerful organizations are not by any means, as might easily be imagined from the lamentable example of the West, class associations. They embrace at once what we call working men, employers and middlemen. There are no essential differences in social condition between their members. Each is at the same time employed and employer;

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each has morally the same rights as any other member ; lastly, each is a holder of property and an earner of wages in virtue of the same titles.

In short, the syndicate is in conformity with the principle of the Three Relations, an artificial family created with economic aims, as the family by blood apparently exists with the aim of the conservation of the species in general.

In one word, it is the work-family, as the other is the blood-family.

This quasi-family organization of the national work constitutes in reality the indomitable strength of the Chinese people.

It would be easy to push the analogy between the syndicate and the family even into the smallest details. But it is, above all, important to disentangle the several points which have an instructive and, if I may venture to say so, a definitive value for the study of the conditions under which fertile relations between China and Europe can be established.

The principal advantage, from the European point of view, if not from the Chinese point of view, in the organization of these syndicates is the non-existence of the salaried class in the European sense of the word.

It must be said that this non-existence is not absolute throughout China. There are exceptions to all rules. In the seaports, for example, which have been up to the present time almost the only places in China well observed (and this again by Europeans but little prepared for so complicated a task) ; in the coast districts, where in China, as everywhere else, the country pours the dregs and surplus of its population, where, in consequence of the instability of the popular

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life, an abnormal situation habitually reigns, the syndicates often play a part difficult of appreciation, and a selfish capitalism, which is nourished, more than anything else, by the instability of the economic conditions, is always raging.

Chinese association quite naturally wins its proudest triumphs in the organization of production; but the life of the coasts is almost entirely taken up with exchange.

In reality, in the places which alone are essential, not of course for European merchants, but for the people of China, that is to say in every quarter in which there is production and exchange, in agriculture, industry, and commerce, the association reigns supreme.

The European seldom observes it, first, because he is not conversant with the institutions, nor generally with the language of the country; and secondly, because each member of an association seems to act towards those who do not form part of it as an individual capitalist.

✓And this is the most conclusive proof of the extraordinary superiority of Chinese civilization over our own. Solidarity, good faith, honesty, reign in the economic life of that country, as they reign among us at most in copy-book maxims. ✓Each associate—and there are sometimes thousands—acts as if on his own account, and actually pledges the responsibility of the entire syndicate. And what is more, the syndicate is never defrauded of the profits which a member has been able to realize individually while forming a part of the society.

It is the principle of reciprocity pushed to the extreme limit of what is realizable. The salaried class is virtually replaced by participation.

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✓ It is the co-operation of all to the profit of all. ✓

Each has under this principle a vital interest that all the others should work at their maximum power and produce the maximum. He will himself profit thereby. In order, then, to gain the maximum he has only one means, viz. to produce the maximum in his own power, and so much the more because treason to the society is expiated quite naturally in a terrible manner. Confidence lost is credit lost, and as in the absence of coined currency credit is the current coin (as will be explained further on), the want of honesty is punished at once by the most atrocious form of poverty, viz. by economic death.

The participation in profits is regulated in a very precise manner, on the one hand according to the contributions of each member to the capital of the society (if the sum total of the means of production at the disposal of the sum total of the members can be called capital), on the other hand according to the intensity of the work of each member in the measure in which it can be valued. This is, above all, possible in trade, the importance or the number of the bargains concluded being easy of verification for each member of the society.

For the rest it must not be imagined that the greatest capitalists, the initiators of the social system, direct the business or profit by it the most.

In the greater number of cases the majority of the associates have not at the time of affiliation the least capital, or, to speak more exactly, the smallest means of production. These proletarians are then considered, or consider themselves among themselves, as borrowers of the means of production. At the beginning they are paid in kind; they are supported by the society.

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Their work is calculated like that of the other members. The receipts from this work, or rather the proportionate part of the general receipts of the society on work which is due to each individual is retained by the society in so far as it exceeds the cost of maintenance, and constitutes henceforth the share of the proletarian in the capital of the society. He who had nothing has now become a partner.

This feat of social prestidigitation would be impossible in the West, first on account of the entirely different—shall I venture to say inferior?—morality of the European ; but further for another reason, which has to do with the secular habits which regulate the work of the West.

The European claims to put himself outside of and above the rest of nature.

Instead of fixing his eyes upon the results of his activity, which alone are important, he looks at himself. He puts himself at the centre of the universe, and calculates the time, that is to say the expenditure, of life which has been necessary to enable him to arrive at a result instead of making a valuation exclusively of the result itself. From abstraction to abstraction he has at last arrived, by a fatal circle, below the point from which he started. He has become a slave again. For he sells himself, he sells his time, instead of selling the produce of his time. He has arrived at (from the Chinese point of view) the abomination that he tries to secure the maximum payment of salary for the minimum of time employed in realizing a minimum of results.

Such is our slavery of the wage-earner. Its characteristic feature, as everybody knows, is the remuneration not of work, but of the human animal, and the

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final separation of the individual from the produce of his labour.

This state of affairs, which we hardly venture to stigmatize in Europe as contrary to nature, seems so horribly absurd to the Chinese in its general features that they refuse to believe in its existence, and that it is almost impossible for them to comprehend the differences between masters and workmen which create in the West that hybrid phenomenon, untranslatable into Chinese, which we call a strike. ✓

Strong in the principle of partnership, the Chinese cannot understand that it can be in the interest of anybody to abridge the hours of labour and to restrict the production of workers. He never gets beyond the idea that the less a man works the less he should gain, and he is incapable, happy creature that he is, of believing in the hateful fact that the man who can accomplish in three hours the work that another does in six ought also to spend six hours in earning the same wages.

No words can reproduce the indignation and pity with which the remarkable men who guide the syndicates in China speak of our ignominious economic organization. One may spend whole hours in explaining to them what a strike is, and making them comprehend the reasons for the discontent of the European working men. When on one occasion they were told that the workers with us have formed syndicates in order to defend their interests with greater success against their employers, and that they even apply to the Governments with this object, they literally jumped.

What do you say? Why then, instead of working, they want to rob! They form secret societies! They

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are mad! Why do they not work if they wish to improve their condition? They are asking for alms. They would only have to increase the intensity of their work to secure a more considerable return.

It takes a world of trouble to convince them that this return would be profitable to the employers exclusively, who in the majority of cases do not even work at their own business, but simply lend their money.

If it is as you say, they would reply in the end: The method of payment of workers among you constitutes a veritable premium upon idleness, and one might even imagine that, impelled by a kind of perverted solidarity, the workers would plot together not only to get themselves paid always by their time, and not by their production, but further so as never to exceed a certain sum of production in a given time; then you would have a premium on inferiority associated with the premium on idleness.

When it has been demonstrated to them that their exhilarating and utopian hypothesis is already realized among us, they remain gasping; and they have been heard to pronounce conclusions of the following nature: You are, after all, mean savages. I am really sorry for you. Suppose—and this will come to pass—that we utilize your technical appliances, how do you propose to exist in competition with us? You have money, we have no coin. But is it necessary? The means of subsistence must be found; gold is not edible. If I produce, if I work, I am worth something, and subsistence is found for me; gold is not wanted for that. The value of my work is enough. Among us a man pays in work, and is paid in credit. For that, evidently, honesty is necessary. Now you have none, for with you a man tries to subsist as richly as pos-

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sible by the minimum of work. Among you there are partners in fights, among us in work. Among you there is pillage, among us production. Why do men condescend among you to get pay for themselves and not for their production ? And you speak of social science and superiority !

With some rare exceptions the co-operative societies of the West restrict themselves to organizing consumption.

Their principle is to reduce the number of middlemen between the producer and consumer to a minimum, and to give the latter the profits which are not absorbed by the needs of administration. The ties which unite the partners in these associations are relatively very feeble. They only consist in the common certainty of finding in the shops of the society the same goods at a lower price than elsewhere. At times it is even difficult to discover the co-operation in these associations ; the individual members only co-operate in them as a general rule in playing the part of customers. And when they have partly contributed to the creation of the original capital of the society, they have really done so as simple shareholders in a company who hope to earn interest without having taken any personal share in the work of making their capital fructify.

The act of buying goods is not work, still less is it veritable co-operation : otherwise the holder of a share in a railway company, who should take a ticket to utilize his line, might say that he is working, and even that he is co-operating in the interests and for the prosperity of his company.

In fact, the co-operative societies in consumption are not co-operative ; they are not even associations,

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and still less syndicates ; for we must understand by this word *organizations which embrace several individuals with the aim of making them work together for the realization of tasks whose accomplishment is to bring profit to each member individually.*

Now the Chinese syndicates of production exactly correspond to this definition.

The Western associations of consumption are obliged to have salaried servants in their employ ; this is the complete negation of co-ôperation ; it is a simple substitution of a collection of capitals for an individual capital, but it acts precisely as the latter.

In a co-operative society of the pure type, the employees, that is to say those who administer the affairs of the society, are the members themselves and no others ; they have no need of a degrading salary which would be the equivalent of their expense in vitality, for they will gain exactly the produce of their work by their participation in the profits of the society.

They certainly also run the risk, if profits failed, of gaining nothing at all ; but in this case the misfortune would be shared by everybody, by the president of the association as well as by the most insignificant of its members, and everybody will at least have an equal interest in making the social capital prosper afresh, everybody will modify his co-operation in conformity with the new circumstances. Ask salaried servants to do this, who earn their payment by their loss of time indifferently, whether the business goes well or the reverse ; more than this, who are even ignorant of the situation and the internal working of the establishment to which they have sold themselves !

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Co-operatives of the pure type, such as dominates in the economic life of China and in the dreams of some European sociologists, can evidently only exist under two preliminary conditions.

First they will necessarily be productive, all the members co-operating effectively, earning their bread by co-operating ; and if they also co-operate in buying, their work, after the European fashion, will not be the work which will guarantee their livelihood. For, on the other hand, these co-operatives are necessarily jointly responsible ; they constitute the combination of *all* the active forces of *all* the members ; and the intentionally selfish action of one of these members in reference to the corporation or even to outsiders becomes an offence against all the others in common.

And here we see why such pure co-operative associations are impossible among ourselves : treachery cannot be prevented by rigorous measures unless the society maintains a body of spies as numerous as the partners : the sentiment of corporate responsibility alone can maintain the association free from individual default.

How is this in some measure absolute solidarity possible ?

It is true that among the Chinese the horror of solitude, in other words the gregarious instinct, dominates the whole of their psychological life. It is also true that the family spirit which, above all in the essential branch of Chinese activity, in agriculture already becomes the co-operative spirit is the strongest and most living expression of the divine principle of the Three Relations. It is, lastly, true that pure co-operation, such as has just been described, is in reality nothing but an artificial family, created with a special aim, and that under this head the solidarity which reigns

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in it can, at least from the Chinese point of view, be assimilated to that which exists in the family enlarged by marriages.

But all this does not explain how a whole form of social organization based on questions of individual interests can subsist upon the moving sands of sensations which seem bound to vary with one individual and another.

The enigma is solved by the fact that the solidarity of the Chinese is the fruit of a secular evolution of the material conditions of exchange.

In China money does not exist ; there is no unit of value instituted, imposed, and guaranteed by the State or the Government, and for the simple reason that a State or a Government which would have the power to do so is not actually in existence. There is no standard of values.

If after recent events the party in the Chinese Court friendly to Europe did publish, in terms devoid of precise meaning, an edict introducing a currency standard, this was a simple farce good enough to delude the ignorant diplomatists of Europe ; all that was done was simply to fix a rate of exchange which should serve to compute, in Chinese terms, sums indicated in foreign currency. The Chinese dynasty simply pledges itself to admit for international exchange the price of the uncoined money upon the Western markets. The repercussion of this purely administrative measure, taken to the sole profit of the Chinese Court, cannot be otherwise than absolutely non-existent in the country.

A metallic standard is superfluous in internal exchange. In this matter China has outstripped the West in a really astounding manner.

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While with us authority has to compel the people to accept certain morsels of metal or official bits of paper as fixed values, the Chinese refuses to recognize a stable and absolute value for any purposes whatever.

With him the produce of work alone has value, and the equivalent of this produce cannot be metal, but solely the public recognition of the fact that such an one has been capable of producing such and such a thing, and that equity wills that he has the right to other produce of a value which seems equal at the given moment.

In other terms, the equivalent of production is credit. And in fact money is replaced by credit; currency by word of honour; capital, accumulated credit, by merit in economic concerns.

Credit is enough in reality to regulate exchange. Even among ourselves we may suppose that a salaried servant who is paid his salary in bits of money, which have as intrinsic value only half their nominal value, really purchases not with the money, with the real value, but with the credit which his month's work procures for him.

Now let us imagine an employer who, instead of giving his servant forty five-franc pieces, hands over to him a signed paper stating that he has worked with him for a month, and that the profit on this work entitles him to be furnished with such and such a quantity of such and such goods, and we shall have very nearly the theoretical scheme of the Chinese system of exchange.

Whether these exchangeable goods consist of tea, silk, wool, silver, gold, precious stones, cattle or anything else, is evidently of no importance. What is

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essential is that the public appreciates the faith which can be granted to the signature of the employer in our illustration (for the rest purely imaginary).

Personal confidence, then, rules exchange and not values which claim to be absolute. The one standard is work, and the one currency credit.

This principle once put into practice, a last bold step remains to be taken in order to reach the perfection of the system.

If credit and confidence once for all rule everything, we can dispense with the written documents affirming the acceptance of credit, the word should be enough as an engagement between honourable people, between people who live by their honesty, in the sense that the credit demanded must be able to be justified at any moment by the produce of their work.

Verbal engagement is in fact the ordinary form of exchange in China. There are, if I may venture to say so, drafts by word of mouth; a simple note in a pocket-book (rarely made for that matter, and only in dealing with new friends) justifies its value. And these drafts are payable in credit, whether in fresh verbal credit, or in the businesses in which this credit is to be employed as currency in distant places, by a written draft, or even in real bills of exchange discounted by bankers, who have no other function than to guarantee by their reputation the honesty of the issuer of the draft.

It is seen that in this system money with a universally guaranteed standard is useless.

What is often considered in the West to be a monetary unit in China, the tael, or, more exactly, the liang, is a weight, and not a value.

Metal always constitutes a simple commodity, and

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a tael or liang of silver has one value to-day, another to-morrow—exactly like a pound of meat or a peck of corn. And as the word of honour of a Chinese merchant, his draft, his assignment, lastly the produce of his work, will have in exchange the moving value of some other commodity, metal, or goods, the absence of a monetary standard happily only signifies the absence of a superfluous intermediary in the comparison of values.

But this creditary system, exclusively based upon values which are relative and appreciable in different ways, can only be maintained. if these values, often purely moral, can at least be always regarded as existent, or, in more simple language, if credit can always and immediately be regarded as acceptable; an accepted credit which should have been granted to some one who has no credit upsets the very principle of the system, and the general mistrust thereby caused would render every exchange impossible.

The purchaser then finds himself virtually caught in a machinery which crushes him as soon as he tries to get out of it.

He must work; he must have credit; if he has none, he no longer has anything. If he does not keep his engagements, or, in a more general fashion, if he loses the confidence of others, he loses credit; and outside the creditary system there is no longer any possible economic existence. The fact of having accumulated goods, metal or other values is of no use to him. All that will be confiscated to atone for the disappointed confidence of others. And what is still more serious, he will never recover, except in exceptional cases, the confidence which will permit him to start afresh. In fine, it is not the possession of capital which gives

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economic strength, but the discounting of the active force of the man.

We see, then, that there is in some sense a material compulsion to observe the universal economic responsibility.

In the course of time this primordial compulsion has become imperceptible ; external constraint constantly repeated ended in declaring itself moral constraint. And if this moral constraint rules trade in general, even between individuals who have no bonds of attachment, it is difficult to conceive the intensity with which it must show itself in the relations of people who in the whole of their economic existence are bound to one another, as in the co-operative syndicates.

We may say, then, that the absence of a guaranteed money, the absence of a recognized standard, form in the last line the real strength of China.

The richest no less than the poorest depends not upon what he possesses, but on what others recognize in him. And this extraordinary principle has its final triumph in the co-operative society in which, independently of the contribution in capital, independently of the social rank of each member, the most capable in economic business is the one who will reign, and who will dispose, on a given occasion, of all the concentrated forces of the association.

Nearly all the great Chinese commercial houses known to Europeans, and even the enterprises attributed to Li-hung-chang, are co-operative establishments, and their extreme strength and coherence are clearly recognizable in the fact that their presidents appear to Western eyes as individual capitalists of surprising wealth and skill ; they are only the administrators of the collective produce of the work accom-

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plished in common by individuals who have been consolidated.

But if in this system of pure co-operation all values become relative, bound up in the confidence which is inspired by persons or associations of persons, it seems clear that there is no longer any room for that essentially stable economic phenomenon which is called property. Property would not even be theft: it simply would not exist.

Do not the facts announce the contrary? No, for in China property is . . . debt.

In the Chinese economic system, ruled by the principle of co-operation, the problem of property necessarily takes quite a different aspect from that which it bears in the Western capitalistic economy, ruled by the principle of renting values. For immovable, guaranteed and imposed values do not exist; the produce of work appreciated as such by the public constitutes directly the basis of exchange without the intervention of the stable intermediary which we call money.

It is then perfectly natural that only the produce of work can be regarded as property, whether this produce of work be already appreciated, and in consequence exchanged or not, is without importance; provided it exists, it will be able to become *value* by exchange, if not at the very moment, in any case in the future; it is in some sort a virtual capital.

Outside this quite special kind of virtual property the possession of capital and the concentration of values are impossible.

A man possesses what he creates.

This principle is applied to the separate individuals as to the associations in their combination. Better still, the member of the association does not even

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possess what he creates. The produce of his work belongs in the first place to the body of members, and only comes to him under the symbolic form of the assignation which confers on him his share in the profit obtained by the exchange of the produce of the association. He only possesses that which has already been appreciated ; that is to say, he possesses nothing at all. He does not dispose of anything ; he only exists economically by the appreciation of the public, which has come into being upon conditions outside his personal influence. This abdication spares him, for that matter, all the labour, all the care, all the expenditure of activity which the individual producer has to apply in order to win appreciation for the produce of his work.

Never has the division of labour been more intelligently applied than in this case ; the sale of the production of some hundreds of individuals will be done perhaps by three or four specially charged with this task ; and the result of the work concentrated on these three or four will doubtless be of a higher order, and will bring so much the more profit to each member individually.

The syndicate is the possessor of what the collective body of its members creates ; the syndicate, in other terms, disposes of the collective production, in this sense, that it can choose the time, the place, and in general the circumstances most favourable to create by exchange a value for the produce of the accumulated work.

But the syndicate itself too only disposes in reality of the produce like the isolated individual. It does not possess stable property which it makes fructify, or from which the produce is drawn by the active force of the members, for the raw materials, the indispensable

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basis of all production, are not created by human work, and for this reason cannot be the absolute property of any one person or any group.

So, then, according to the Chinese point of view, the primordial means of production have this peculiarity, that existing outside human activity they cannot in principle belong to one individual rather than to another.

Everybody has the same right to the treasures of nature ; and consequently raw materials are social property. The private individual, and indeed the syndicate, can take them into his disposition under certain conditions, under the title of loan of property, by making society profit thereby.

This compensation does not always consist in the payment of an impost to the Government, which would then be the official representative of society. In most cases the fact that work transforms raw material in a manner useful to society is considered sufficiently meritorious to authorize the exploitation of nature.

This conception of property is so superior to our own, and for that reason so difficult for our brains to comprehend, being the brains of sociologists in the embryo, that it seems useful to describe in a precise example the practical working of the theoretic system which has just been set forth. Let us take for that purpose agricultural co-operation, the most perfect of all, since it must in the first place dispose of a raw material, the soil, which is borrowed social property ; then exploit this material, transform it industrially, bring it into commercial currency, draw value from it financially, make its members derive profit from it economically, and furnish them with the possibility of raising their social situation.

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We know that in no country in the world is agriculture practised with so much love and science as in China. It is in some sort the holy profession ; the agriculturist is by the exercise of his profession the benefactor of the nation. And that is why nobody voluntarily abandons a profession noble among all the professions without being driven to that course by necessity or by a perverse mental disposition.

From immemorial times the culture of a piece of land has been transmitted from father to son, from friend to friend, and the intense work of ages devoted to the production of what is the primordial condition of life consecrated in the eyes of Society, the apparently inadmissible fact that individuals or groups of individuals dispose of parcels of a soil which belongs to the collective nation.

This is an eternal lease tacitly established between the agriculturist and Society. But it is only a lease subject to revocation. If the plot of land remains uncultivated, if the hereditary agriculturist does not fulfil his duty, which is to justify the gratuitous lease by the most conscientious and intense exploitation of the soil, he loses his liberty of free disposal, the lease is virtually cancelled, the land reverts directly to Society ; and Society will let it to others, but this time no longer only under the obligation to exploit, but against a rent to be paid to Society represented by the administration of the Government, a rent which the Western is easily tempted to consider a land-tax.

It is not surprising that leases to eternity, which at first sight closely resemble European landed property, should still be the immense majority in our days. They are so, above all, because individual agriculture has been more and more replaced by co-operative agri-

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culture ; for the co-operative society always finds a means of exploiting the totality of its lands, and consequently it will never fall, so to say, under the blow of social confiscation.

In reality the agricultural co-operative society is very complicated ; the more members it includes who enjoy their leases to eternity, the more it forms a kind of co-operative association of co-operative societies. For each nominal and hereditary exploiter is in reality himself the administrator of a yet smaller co-operative society, whether this last be composed exclusively of members of his own family, or whether it embraces other workers, that is to say, other partners who collaborate, and for that reason have a right to a share in the total revenue.

In the large co-operative society, which often embraces a whole village, even a whole district, the holder of a perpetual lease nearly always reserves to himself the direction of the special exploitation of his patrimony, and receives also, logically, a more considerable share of the profits, because of his more precious contribution, than, for example, the members of the co-operative who are working in his company on his patrimony, and do not themselves dispose of properties of the same kind subject to revocation.

Here, then, we have a first basis of economic differentiation in the co-operative society ; it is in favour of ancient proprietors, Europe will say. No, says the Chinese, it is the reward of the secular accomplishment of the sacred duty, for if the ancestors of those who no longer have a patrimony had fulfilled their agricultural task, they would not have lost it, and the family constituting a symbolic unit from one generation to another, it is perfectly admissible and even a moral

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necessity useful for the future, that the descendant should be punished for the failure in duty committed by his ancestors by a diminished participation. This differentiation is explained then by a principle special to the Chinese, and less Jesuitical than would be imagined.

But other principles of differentiation are not wanting, and, above all, the differentiation in virtue of capacity.

Let us suppose, for example, that a whole village has organized itself into a co-operative society in order to give itself up to agriculture. It then finds at its head, as surveyors responsible towards Society (represented by the authority of the Government), an elected triumvirate composed of old men, retired agriculturists, who, for the duration of their mandate, in recognition of the social character of their functions, are raised to the eighth rank of State functionaries. These censors, who are placed outside the machinery of the co-operative, but share in the profits in reward of their salutary control, exercise by their verbal or written reports addressed to the administrative authorities an enormous influence upon the management of the affairs of the syndicate. They can at any moment bring into action judicial intervention to punish negligence, idleness, infraction of the principles of co-operation, bad conduct and abstraction of the means of production or of produce, which, logically, forms part of the stock-in-trade of the syndicate.

The real administrators of the co-operative are not, however, these overseers who do not co-operate, but those who organize the distribution of the means of production and the distribution of the profits among the members. These are never, incredible as that may

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seem to Westerns, those who might enjoy special consideration in virtue of the importance of their material contribution to the syndicate : they are in a general way really the most capable. Thus it can be said that in China every starveling carries in his head the authority which will one day dispose of incalculable wealth. The fact is that the Chinese often follows in a wholly instinctive manner the principles of evolution that we have succeeded in unravelling only at the cost of immense intellectual and moral efforts ; for him it is an axiom that to try to hamper the march of natural selection is at once presumptuous and stupid.

Thus for the administrator of the syndicate there is not even an electoral campaign, such is the certainty that in all cases the man most capable of directing men will be able to assert himself, and this man is never the economically strongest ; it was not the all-powerful Li-hung-chang in the numerous syndicates to which he belonged ! What a miracle of good sense ! For the strongest, personally, in credit, will be suspected of pursuing private interests ; he will not have the confidence of all, and no one will bow to his decisions. The most powerful, again, is not the most capable for directing purposes, and the great majority of the administrators of syndicates are men of extraordinary moral energy, intelligence and integrity ; they are, in one word, gentlemen to the very ends of their nails ; and they wear them long.

It would be beyond the scope of this inquiry to set forth in detail the working of these administrations : one example, perhaps the most curious, will give an idea. This is the organization of the manuring of the soil, justly considered as almost the most important task of the agriculturist. We know that, leaving out

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of consideration the organization of the syndicate, the real strength of Chinese agricultural production lies in the ingenious use of human manure. Here, then, we have a means of production which, more than any other, is a social property in the co-operative, the abstraction or negligent waste of which is inadmissible. The syndicate possesses special reservoirs destined to receive the collective deposits of members and their families. There is no need to superintend narrowly this interesting part of co-operation, because nobody can have an interest in withdrawing himself from it, and, furthermore, because a quite special knowledge is required to superintend the fermentation and the use of the precious ingredient. The members charged by the general confidence with this difficult task establish regular manuring surveys, and succeed, by supplying the manure according to the needs of the soil, in realizing the maximum of results with the minimum of expenditure.

The same ideal is pursued and often reached by the labour of the other administrative committees. And we may conclude therefrom that those who are considered incapable of taking part in the committees have work which is in the main the lightest, even if it is the most mechanical.

Thus not only is there the ancient landed property falling into abeyance as soon as it no longer justifies itself by labour, which constitutes a social debt ; but also the intellectual property, which reimburses itself in administrative ingenuity to the profit of the community.

It is evident that an agricultural syndicate on such a vast scale can in reality produce all that is needed to satisfy the wants of its members, and that in consequence

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it is hardly placed in the necessity of betaking itself to external exchange ; it acquires a considerable independence. It is, if I may venture to say so, autonomous. Let us now imagine a countless crowd of such organizations more or less autonomous, and we shall have that which constitutes not only Society, not only the nation, but also the Chinese State. It is an enormous and complicated co-operative of co-operatives ; it is the Association State.

Chinese society, in its collective aspect, constitutes from the economical point of view a very vast and complicated system of co-operative associations, which penetrate one another, form fresh associations among themselves, absorb one another, and thus widen their spheres of activity in proportions which the West is incapable of understanding in organizations fundamentally economic, which, in one word, dominate the whole common life in their complex harmony with the same authority as is held in Europe by those vague conceptions, of little practical utility perhaps to the well-being of the masses, which are called with a mysterious veneration the State, the Country and the Nation. These conceptions have no equivalent in China ; or rather they are epitomized in the one solitary conception of economic association. This primordial difference between the European ideal of the State and the Chinese notion of Society, once recognized, will throw light on a large number of mysteries and curious peculiarities which puzzle and amuse European observers of the Chinese State and its policy.

Among the Chinese social life coincides in some sort entirely with economic life. In all the other categories of human interests and activities the Chinese is essen-

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tially an individualist. The religious community, so powerful at times in Europe, does not exist, all beliefs, all rites, all systems of morality and metaphysics being recognized with the same authority. Community of temperament, which among us has become the sign of race, does not exist ; nothing in fact can be more different than the lively, careless people of the South, the heavy calm population of the Eastern plains, the mistrustful but fundamentally kind men of the North, and the vigorous, alert, somewhat coarse peoples of the Western Chinese Alps. Even the linguistic unity of the Chinese exists only in the imagination of Europeans ; on close study we discover that there are in China nearly as many different languages as in Europe ; only the ingenious writing, which can be read equally well in any idiom meets that enormous difficulty little known among ourselves. Economic relations then alone remain as the bond which attaches the Chinese to what we call their nationality, for, as has been already said, the apparent community of government means nothing from the European political point of view. This is a fact which Europe has never consented to admit in spite of all the hard lessons, in spite of the despatch of scientific and other missions, in spite of innumerable opportunities for learning the lesson.

What Europe persists in considering as a Government with the same authority as those which afflict the West, that is to say as an institution, which disposes of the financial, economic, military and other resources of the nation, is in truth only a kind of supreme council of superintendence of an immense system of associations, a council which controls but does not govern. This controlling institution is outside the national life ; in a word, it does not co-operate in the development of the

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general welfare. The real national and economic life is unfolded in the co-operative association which is sufficiently vast not to depend absolutely upon external exchange ; that is to say, in the association in which is produced on the whole co-operatively all that the consuming force of the totality of its members ever absorbs. Such an association can only be the organization in common, according to the principles of co-operation, of a certain number of professional co-operative societies, which on their side will very probably be composed of other co-operative societies more restricted and more specialized. There will thus also be perhaps an association of co-operative societies which regulate, one the different kinds of agriculture ; others the different trades of artisans ; others again the different branches of industry, commerce and transport ; lastly, others which are concerned with financial business. All these together manifestly produce nearly the whole of the objects which their members can ordinarily need.

If, then, the members all associated together consume simply what they have collectively produced, the whole organization, taken as a unit, will be self-sufficing and will be economically independent of external aid. Now, this will of necessity come to pass when this whole system finds itself sharply localized on an extent of territory which permits all its members to proceed to direct exchange without using intermediary transport, and, on the other hand, is sufficiently isolated to make its inhabitants feel a local spirit. These conditions are met, generally speaking, by the local district taken as an economic unity. But the local district, the "hsien," is also the administrative or governmental unit.

The economic quasi-autonomy involves the adminis-

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trative quasi-autonomy, both governmental and political; and the "hsien" is so thoroughly the model of the Chinese State form, that it is on principle officially and historically considered as the basis of the Empire, and that the larger administrative units, such as the "tchou," the "fou," and, above all, the province, are in theory as well as in practice an exact but enlarged repetition of the "hsien."

China, then, as an administrative unit offers the curious spectacle of a federation on an economic basis with autonomous decentralization pushed to an extreme.

The political and administrative consequences of this system do not seem, in the context of this inquiry, as interesting as the economic consequences. These last can be summed up almost completely in the observation, that to the good fortune of the people, but to the distress of that ignominious Western idol, the State, *the people is rich and the Government poor.*

In the West it is the reverse; to say so is to pass sentence.

In the life of peoples centralization means the sacrifice of the general well-being to those external appearances in which some persons delight. China understood this from the beginning; it is still ignored by Europe. And that is why the States of the West commit errors and blunders as soon as they come into contact with the central institution of administrative control of Chinese society, which they persist in qualifying and treating as a Government. This incomprehensible persistence in a mistake was never revealed so lamentably as in the course of recent events. The coalition of the West attacked an organization which might disappear without thereby causing any necessity for the

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smallest change in the march of Chinese life. For the self-styled Chinese Government hovers above the nation without possessing the power to dispose of its military, financial or other forces. It is then said with some reason that China is weak ; but then we are speaking of the State, and the State does not exist in China. China as a popular unit is only the stronger ; for she is so much the richer. Only the Europeans sent to the spot to get information ignore the fact.

A very characteristic example of this has occurred ; it has to do with the fixing of the sum of the indemnity extorted at this very moment from the self-styled Chinese Government by the Western hordes which have invaded China. The sum has in fact been calculated at 450 millions of ounces of silver, according to the self-styled budget of China, which is only the budget of the supreme controlling institution of the country ! This is much as if among ourselves we regarded the allowance of £48,000 paid to the President of the French Republic as the budget of France. It was said at the time that the indemnity demanded already exceeded the resources of China, and the rudimentary logic of those who direct the States called civilized discovered in the end this marvellous combination. An economic crisis is to be feared in the West : therefore new outlets must be found. To open these outlets war was made upon China. This war costs money. Money then must be found. We would like to take it from China at once, by force, without the remote wile of the exploitation of opened outlets. But obviously the Chinese Government (the only organ of Chinese life to which the West knew how to apply) has no money. It is, however, willing to pay if it is provided with the means. Then it is necessary to procure money

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for the Chinese Government. Money is procured by establishing a system of customs, that is to say, *by closing against themselves the very outlets for which the European Powers at first took action*. Here then we see formidable expenses undertaken in reality to prevent the realization of the aim for which they were undertaken. The vicious circle is prodigious.

Yet the situation that ensues is all that could be desired both for the Chinese people, which will learn to use the technical appliances of Europe while deriding her, and for the Westerns, who are punished, though inadequately, for the insolence which they display, like real savages, towards those whom they believe to be the more feeble, and who outwit them.

For China could easily pay sums ten times greater than those which Europe demands of her and . . . previously pays her. Only how is so much bullion to be found in a country which dispenses with currency? How can we withdraw from the creditary circulation the formidable but virtual riches, which are at the disposition of private persons, co-operative societies, associations of co-operative societies, not to mention autonomous districts, autonomous departments, and, lastly, autonomous provinces? And even if it were possible to turn into currency that extraordinary prosperity which can only be known by a man who has lived inside the great associations, the Government could not profit. There is no power to dispose of the forces of the autonomous groups of which the most extensive, as we have seen, are themselves the administrative units of the Empire. And of these units the most important is the one which in Europe is called the province.

The central Government, the Court, the administra-

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tion of the Empire only receives from the Provinces a kind of surplus from the provincial budget ; this on its side only reckons the excesses of the departmental budgets ; and these latter live on the surpluses of the district budgets, which, lastly, are balanced, not in accordance with the exigencies of the State, but simply according to the economic system which reigns in the locality. In this way it is evident that the expenses of the State must be reduced to a minimum ; for the excess from the local and autonomous budgets will never be considerable. They resemble in some degree the so-called matricular contributions, which, furnished separately by the German States, feed the treasury of the German Empire, while the latter has no quality in virtue of which it can concern itself with the sources drawn on by the States in order to supply them. In other words, the central Government cannot intervene in drawing up the local budgets, whose surpluses, however, feed its own budget. The innumerable local budgets are naturally drawn up in anticipation of a certain surplus which can be remitted to the superior administration without danger to the district.

But it stands out plainly that with this system there is a quasi-impossibility for the central Government to supply itself with funds which exceed to any considerable extent those which accrue to it at ordinary times. It can only make an appeal to the generosity of the provincial administration, which in its turn must endeavour to collect more considerable sums by making an appeal to the goodwill of the inferior administrations. In the end the Imperial treasury demands the increase of revenues from the amiability of each member of the gigantic economic organization which we call the Chinese Empire. And the common sense of

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the people is sufficiently robust to laugh to scorn without respect and with considerable vigour all the dynastic, political, military, monetary, or other considerations which do not concern it.

This state of affairs, once brought into the light, illumines a number of puzzles which perplex the economists, the politicians, and, lastly, the public of the West. Let us admit that this system of budgets is admirable because it puts the welfare of the people above everything.

It is useless to add that the equivalent would be absolutely impossible in Europe. We require for that a people which is radically disencumbered of all those abstract conceptions on which the West feeds its vanity, such as country, patriotism, State, glory and the rest. We require a people which seeks its happiness in terrestrial life, and considers art, science, the play of ideas, faith, and ritual as what they really are, a luxury destined to embellish life, and nothing more. ✓ The Chinese people, by its system of education and co-operative organization, which embraces all branches of human activity in a more or less visible fashion, has got nearer to the economic ideal than any other nation. ✓ It matters little if this ideal, essentially gregarious, is different from our own, or if the West sets up another which seems to it superior. ✓

The social lesson of China ought not to have been ignored, for this lesson exists, and it is the presumption of the Western, in face of this strange spectacle, which is guilty of having stirred an obstinate struggle in a quarter in which emulation would have been becoming.

V

Xenophobia in China. Hostile Contact of the Two Civilizations

IN the presence of a social organization of this nature what should we expect to have been the part played by Western civilization,—brought into these regions in the first instance by commerce and more especially by English commerce ?

It must have appeared all the more inferior and contemptible because the European traders refused to observe the habits of the Chinese. To do in China as China does would have been an act of politeness and at the same time an advantage ; but at the beginning Chinese manners were unknown, and later on European competition and the capitalist system which demands a rapid turn over of money in great businesses, prevented any assimilation with the commercial usages which rule the internal traffic with remarkable security, but with a slowness which makes Europeans desperate. This slowness is evidently a consequence of the fundamental principle of exchange in China, to wit, that exchange only takes place by personal relations and on credit, a habit with which English commerce offers the completest contrast.

Now, the difference in commercial morality has always remained as deep as at the beginning. In their

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mutual relations the English committed a series of acts gravely offensive to Chinese temper and etiquette, and in the same way the conduct of the Chinese could not fail to inspire the English with astonishment, and excite their impatience. Soon, in the case of each people, it became a question of national pride, or rather of faith in the superiority of its own civilization, not to yield to the influence of the other, or not to submit its conduct to the rules of foreigners.

So long as such an incompatibility of practical views was only manifested in the external forms of their relations the mischief was not perhaps irremediable, at least on the European side, although, as we know, the Chinese sees in the observation of his millenary laws of good behaviour the primordial proof of a cultivated mind. But already from this external point of view, whose importance for the Chinese Europeans have never consented to recognize, obstinacy, at first unconscious and engendered by ignorance, then deliberate, and, above all, the habit—a bad one under any circumstances—of wishing to give the foreigner lessons in good behaviour, could only bear detestable fruits.

The fault was evidently with the Europeans; for the visitor ought in general to conform to the habits of his host, and not the reverse, except in the rare cases in which the condition of the visitor is infinitely superior to that of the host. Now this is not at all the case with the Westerns in China. The etiquette, the manners, the mental refinement, the intellectual culture which the trader or the seaman brought to China were certainly of an order considered inferior even in Europe; and it is questionable whether the highest mental culture of Europe has any terrors for the highest culture of China. There is then nothing astonishing

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in the fact that the Chinese of the superior classes instinctively refused to receive the foreign trader as an equal, and above all to consider his civilization, the civilization of the people represented by him, as superior to the Chinese system. Europeans could not but appear uncultivated to the Chinese from the point of view of external civilization, and backward, or in any case dangerous, from the economic point of view. The Europeans were not slow to feel this. They avenged themselves by doubly despising Chinese institutions. In short, they behaved like colonizers, This type of the small conqueror, stupid and a bully, whose first dogma is his own immense superiority, was certainly not calculated to inspire the Chinese with sympathy. He could only hamper relations which might have been fertile ; a method of procedure which is not good, but at least possible, in the presence of Kaffirs, Papuans or Redskins, is real madness in face of a people which has its own social organization, which is civilized. For, after all, mere force was good for nothing in commercial relations with the Chinese. Negotiation was what was wanted ; the brigandage of the colonist was impossible. And negotiation assumes goodwill on both sides, or (what is better) reciprocal needs. Now the European certainly had need of the Chinese, but the Chinese had no need of the European. If, then, the latter wanted to make the work of his own country prosper, it was before all necessary to create fresh needs for the Chinese ; if, on the other hand, he only wanted to bring prosperity to his personal affairs by carrying on local trade or exporting Chinese produce, he had need of the goodwill of the Chinese producer before all things. In any case relations based upon mutual confidence seemed in-

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dispensable. But this intimacy of relations has only very rarely been seen between Western and Chinese merchants. Thus mistrust was at the foundation of their relations.

It is very interesting to note in this context that the coldness of external relations, reinforced by a strong dose of contempt, has been observable from the beginnings of Sino-European trade, and that this disagreeable phenomenon was totally absent in the forms of the relations between Chinese and Russian traders. Peïssovitch, in pursuing the official commercial mission of which we have spoken, while going up the Yang-tse, was so much struck by it at Han-kow that he felt the need for a minute description of it and for inquiring into the causes of this difference. Han-kow, the great centre of the tea trade at the confluence of the Yang and the Han, is nearly the only place in the interior of China where a group of Russians exists side by side with a society of Westerns (English). As early as 1879 Peïssovitch remarked on what a different footing the Russo-Chinese trade and the Anglo-Chinese trade were conducted. While the Russians willingly observed the Chinese usage, which claims that a business visit is a private visit, and does not show its interested character, the English did everything to ruffle the Chinese sentiment in this respect, and this is more unfortunate than would be thought at first sight.

With the Chinese system of exchange, which has just been described, with, above all, the dangerous habit of verbal contracts, it appears to the Chinese to be of quite the first necessity to know a business friend personally and as intimately as possible, or at least sufficiently to be able to form a judgment founded upon

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his character. So before concluding business with a new friend both sides go through a series of preparatory steps, exchanges of politeness, visits, discussions and other procedures suitable to form an acquaintance, the only use of which is to give each of the parties an opportunity for forming an opinion upon the other. When at last the business relations are inaugurated, the parties already know one another so well that they have come to consider themselves and to treat one another as friends. (This is exactly the contrary of what takes place in Europe, where, with very rare exceptions, men do not become friends except through business, or at least professional relations.) When, then, such friends find it necessary to talk business they necessarily do so on a friendly footing; they pay a visit, talk of one thing and another, and only incidentally or towards the end of the time arranged for the visit enter on the real object of their proceeding. The result of this is that business visits, which in France last ten minutes, in Germany five, in England one, require at least half-an-hour in China for the most trifling matter. And it is no rare thing to see the exchange of opinions or politenesses between good friends draw out for half a day. A visit whose only use should be to discuss business, and would put in the second place the interest which is taken in the personality of the man with whom we converse and in his qualities, seems under these conditions a serious failure in good manners, an impertinence, an affront.

It follows, of course, that the Chinese, anxious to be considered as forming part of the well educated classes, anxious also to maintain himself on good terms with his business friends, will do all that he can to avoid such reproaches, and will make great efforts to receive

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his visitors in his house with the best possible grace, and above all those of whom he has need.

The Russian, with his proverbial *chirokaya natoura*, his expansive nature, bends easily to this way of looking at things ; he likes talking, he likes letting himself loose upon a number of subsidiary questions, he also likes inviting his visitors to drink, to eat and to smoke, as much as he adores being well and liberally received when he pays a visit himself. His easy manners, which easily take on an affectionate turn suited to gain credit for the depth of his attachment, are not unfavourably regarded by the Chinese ; they bear a resemblance to an etiquette, a system of courtesy, very different from that of the Chinese, but after all sufficient to indicate the desire to please. Thus at Han-kow and at Ow-tchow (the provincial capital opposite on the other bank of the Yang-tse) Russians and Chinese were in permanently amicable relations which, by the report of eye-witnesses, were altogether identical in form and spirit with those which are observed on the Russo-Chinese frontier, notably at Kiakhta.

With the English it was quite another matter. A rough manner of conducting affairs, the quite external relations which characterize English business, and, above all, the claims of each party wishing the other to adopt his own method of proceeding—all this united to make business visits a penal servitude, to sow hate and mistrust, necessarily to engender ill-will, the desire of doing the other party a bad turn, and therefore contests, disputes, and finally an actual hostility badly dissembled under the necessity of doing business ; in short, the Anglo-Chinese trade was a knavish trial of strength in which at each moment the one who needed the other had to undergo humiliations of every kind,

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outrages sometimes ridiculous, sometimes odious, and even real criminal attacks. The English traders at Han-kow, for example, had come to no longer allowing their Chinese business friends to enter their houses. They made them wait in the street in the sun or in the mud. They then received them in front of the entrance, the Englishman sitting under the doorway, while the Chinese, no matter whether he was a great personage or a small clerk, a man of the people or a member of the educated class, remained outside, standing, waiting in this ridiculous and humiliating posture for the end of the conversation. It is evident that when occasion arose the English were not much better received by the Chinese.

The result of such a war in mutual discourtesy could not be anything except exasperation of the Chinese against the insolent Westerns, and exasperation of the arrogant Westerns against their hosts, who refused to allow themselves to be treated like savages or slaves. And it is curious enough that the Russian, who for the first time describes this state of affairs (the Westerns have never spoken of it up to this day), at once expresses the opinion, more sacrilegious to-day than ever, that the pretended xenophobia of the Chinese, of which the Westerns speak, only exists in reality in proportion as the Western refuses to treat the Chinese as a civilized man. This observation, which is made everywhere in China by those who are capable of placing themselves at an impartial point of view, was certainly easier to make at Han-kow than elsewhere, because the strange juxtaposition of Russo-Chinese with Anglo-Chinese relations only occurs at this place. But in all the other ports and trading towns, where Anglo-Chinese trade exists, the situation

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is perceptibly the same. Chinese xenophobia is in a direct ratio with the civilizing claims of the Westerns. On the other hand, it does not exist where a European lives alone among the Chinese without claiming to impose upon them the morals and ideas of the Christian invaders.

VI

Basis and Difficulties of Trade between China and the West. Extra-territorial Jurisdiction and its fatal Results. Chinese Justice

THE kind of xenophobia, however, which rests fundamentally on nothing but the different conception of external forms and their importance in social relations is rather a form of stubbornness than a real source of serious misunderstandings. Unfortunately, in the Anglo-Chinese relations (others were negligible), much more serious points in dispute declared themselves before long. The hatred, which had been that of the well educated man for the man who fails to treat him with respect, became that of the honest man for the malefactor who not only remains unpunished, but over and above that puts his accuser on his trial. This vexatious development had become possible, if not inevitable, with the establishment of diplomatic relations pursued between the European Powers and the Manchu dynasty.

While between powers which treat one another as equals official relations are ordinarily purely political, and the task of the diplomatists consists exclusively in defending the general interests of their countries as administrative units, the official relations with the

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Chinese Government have rather been of an economic order, and the task of the diplomatists accredited to the Court of Peking consisted, above all, in taking charge of the private interests of the merchants of their own countries, and that not by observing a defensive conduct, but by displaying an aggressive energy which, in the eyes of the Chinese made them appear rather as commercial agents than national representatives. From the moment when China was regarded in the West as a country to be colonized, civilized, exploited, dominated nearly on the same lines as India, the diplomatists could have no attitude except that of residents trying to impose their will upon a Government regarded almost as a vassal. And as, on the other hand, the question of trade altogether took the upper hand in European policy in China, there is no occasion to feel surprise that Western diplomacy, and along with it the European Powers, have been considered by the Chinese as vast and very powerful enterprises in exploitation.

The conflicts on the subject of opium had been the strongest proof of the economic character of the European invasion. The fact of undertaking such costly and savage expeditions with the sole object of imposing on the Chinese a commodity with which they do not know what to do was considered by the latter as pure madness or as the manifestation of a baseness of view thoroughly calculated to inspire contempt and anger. In any case, the interminable series of small diplomatic difficulties never cropped up except on the subject of commercial advantages or disadvantages ; for the complications raised by the proceedings of the missions officially appointed to Christianize the Chinese population were reduced in the end, as we shall see, to the same commercial question.

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The military superiority of the West displayed on different occasions naturally weighed with a very heavy stress upon the diplomatico-commercial relations. It tended quite naturally to create for the Europeans who came to China an exceptional position, such as could ensure them every facility for conducting their enterprises successfully without regard to Chinese habits or institutions. It was an aggressive policy with the aim of constraining the Chinese Government to grant commercial privileges to Europeans of increasingly greater importance, and the dynasty, which, in the eyes of the Westerns, represents in itself the whole of China, could not, under penalty of being drawn into complications disastrous to its position, refuse the extraordinary status which was demanded, that of licensed invaders. The Europeans, although established in China, remained Europeans from the point of view of civil and criminal law, as well as from the point of view of nationality. This is an exception which has not yet been seen in any civilized people except for some twenty years in Japan, and it was evidently not of its own free will that the Manchu dynasty granted the strangers this position above the laws ; it was a usurpation of the foreigners, who thought themselves masters of the country because they were conquerors of the dynasty.

Europeans remained legally responsible to authorities from their original countries. This, in the eyes of the Chinese, was the consecration of an inadmissible state of affairs, whereby in the event of litigation an exceptional jurisdiction, working with the knowledge of all to the profit of one of the parties, would not only give the case against the plaintiff, but further denounce him as suspect.

The extra-territorial courts of the Europeans were,

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in the first place, a grave offence to the Chinese people, which possesses laws, a minutely organized judicial system, and institutions which guarantee the impartiality of decisions in a high degree. By overlooking it the Europeans made the Chinese system appear inferior, contemptible, unworthy of them. They were perhaps right from their own point of view as conquerors ; it was certainly very simple, as soon as European interests were at stake, to apply laws unknown of the Chinese in a no less enigmatical language. But the reason advanced to promote the extra-territorial system before the Chinese and their Government was none the less hypocritical.

Chinese jurisdiction was stigmatized as venal, partial, corrupt and irregular ; and in order to support this opinion, a stand was taken upon the fact that the mandarins charged with the settlement of cases often accept payments from their clients.

Now Chinese jurisdiction is by no means so corrupt as Europeans, generally interested parties, represent it to be. It has one grave defect of organization, in that it is not separated from the administration, at least in the courts of first instance. In villages the mayor is at the same time commissary of police and justice of the peace. But it was a monstrous exaggeration to identify all the defects inherent in the civil administration with the strange proceedings which are sometimes shown in the application of the laws.

The officials, as representatives of the central government, are responsible for the payment of the taxes, and we have seen the complicated machinery from the village co-operative to the province by which the taxes have to be found. Under these conditions the part of administrative functionaries is in some measure analo-

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gous to that of the ancient farmers of taxes. And all the defects of this system are situated entirely in the necessity of forming sufficient surpluses to feed the budgets of the higher courts. Part of these surpluses will easily remain in the private safe of the official.

This disagreeable state of affairs has been developed, above all, under the rule of the Manchu dynasty. The Ta-Tsing, a warrior race, badly prepared in the beginning for the administration of so vast a social community, from cupidity and with the object of economizing taxes, organized the country in such a way as to grant often inadequate salaries to the functionaries, while leaving them, according to the old habit of the nomad Tartar administrations, full liberty to indemnify themselves on the broad back of the taxpayer. It has never been possible to amend this system, which is entirely to the profit of the official place-men, because, as has been explained, the body of interested officials constitutes the only hold that the dynasty has upon the people. Officials compelled to renounce their almost absolute autonomy from the administrative point of view would simply abandon the dynasty; and as the people simply hate the officials and remain, on the other hand, absolutely indifferent in face of the dynasty which it does not know, reform would be the end of the Ta-Tsing. But this does not prove that jurisdiction is generally a simple farce played for the advantage and to the profit of the highest bidder. For not all the officials of the administration are corrupt nor are all the magistrates concerned in the administration of the taxes. If, in the sub-departments, for example, the sub-prefect is *eo ipso* the highest magistrate, and the word *yamen*, which designates his official seat, signifies at the same

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time "tribunal," he certainly is not the only man who directs the innumerable judicial cases which arise in his district. With us the position of a first president in a court of appeal is easily regarded as a political as well as a judicial position, and a first president or general prosecutor only sits rarely, and in the most important or sensational cases. Similarly in China the numerous officials charged specially with Chinese jurisdiction alongside of the political administration represent the system much more directly than do the great personages. Division of labour has necessarily rendered the magistrates more or less independent of one another ; and he would be rash who, accepting the statements of interested observers as demonstrated truths, should believe that jurisdiction is centralized in China in the political functionaries in such a manner as to render it illusory. The Europeans, for that matter, being considered strangers, were the last to know the Chinese system ; they have never had to deal except with the representatives of the Government, whose judicial attributes are only put forward in practice in extraordinary cases.

Theoretically the application of the laws is absolutely gratuitous, and accessible even to the poorest. This principle, which, it must be admitted, is often none too well observed in civil actions, makes penal jurisdiction extremely precise, rapid and impartial. In cases in which the magistrates have no need to live upon their ' gratifications,' or simply cannot do so because of their position, and these form the immense majority of cases, ✓ their interest, if we absolutely must have it that they judge by interest, entirely corresponds with the interests of justice. Another advantage is that ✓ advocates and attorneys do not exist. ✓ A man defends himself,

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assisted by friends if there is an opportunity. In civil causes there is a small difference. Long and complicated processes do not exist in this department either. But in this case the tribunal takes the aspect of a body of arbitrators, and while the penal jurisdiction is fundamentally nothing but an enlarged police system, the civil becomes, leaving out of account all police interference, an institution which we should rather compare to a solicitor's office than to a tribunal ; and very often civil actions then assume the manner of a friendly arrangement in which the arbitrator naturally inclines to the party who is most agreeable to him. This state of affairs naturally causes civil actions to be extremely rare : seeing that everybody is certain that in most cases a much better settlement will be reached without the intervention of official arbitrators than by submitting the case to their opinion. But, on the other hand, we must not overlook the fact that many suits which we should qualify among ourselves as belonging to the civil or even commercial court are practically considered in China as subject to the penal laws.

This is absolutely natural in view of the economic organization of society which has been described. The man who does not honour a debt contracted even verbally, the man who does not meet his financial engagements, the man who puts himself in a position in which it is impossible for him to maintain his credit, or who fraudulently or ignorantly usurps a place in the creditary system which he cannot make good, does not only commit an act which is liable to bring loss upon other private persons, but attacks the form of society at its foundation ; he contravenes the fundamental law which rules the common life of China : he is a criminal.

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Now, even with the defective administrative organization of the Empire, the magistrates, other than direct representatives of the central Government, have no need in three-quarters of the Empire to receive fees from those implicated in correctional processes. And if sometimes the police, which depends on the administration and obeys the official, proceeds in a reprehensible fashion by discovering, apprehending and bringing to justice presumed criminals, the jurisdiction itself is almost totally free from the enormous defects which are generally attributed to it in Europe. Outside the political and police officials, the judicial organization is, from the point of view of guarantees to the accused, certainly equal to our own. In nearly all the small towns there is a court of correction composed of three judges. In villages, it is true, the administrative official, the mayor, performs the duties of a justice of the peace. But the real strength of the system is situated precisely in the hierarchy of the courts. In all cases, without exception, an appeal can be made from a court of one instance to its immediate superior, but appellants who crowd the courts with unjust and manifestly lost cases are punished. As for criminal cases, and, above all, where misdemeanours are in question which may involve the penalty of death, Chinese justice shows extreme prudence. The dangerous institution of juries naturally does not exist : but every criminal case has to pass through five or even six courts. The most important is perhaps the provincial court, presided over by the Ngit-thaï, a court sufficiently remote from all private interests to exclude partiality, and whose president, with his monthly salary of about £300, would not be easily bribed by persons unknown to him. The highest court is the

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San-fat-sze, Court of the three Tribunals, composed of members of the Ministry of Justice, of the Tow-tchayowan, Court of the Censors, and of the Ta-li-sze, Court of Cassation. This high tribunal states the case afresh in presence of the accused and of the civil party. Nevertheless, death sentences, before being submitted to the Emperor, are once again officially remitted to a high committee of nine members composed of a member of each ministry and of the three chambers of the San-fat-sze. They are carried out upon the signature of the Emperor under his order at a fixed date which is the same for the whole Empire. All criminal actions are taken down in shorthand.

This judicial organization is certainly not perfect, and even many Chinese are only moderately satisfied with it. But it forms a whole with the administration, the habits, the principles, and also the economic turn of Chinese life. The pretence of ignoring it, or assuming it to be inferior and impracticable was at least an imprudence on the part of the Europeans which was bound still further to embitter the unfriendly character of mutual relations.

It was, however, a much graver step to impose even upon Chinese in litigation with Europeans the jurisdiction of the latter. That a colony of foreigners established in a country should do what it pleases among its members, and especially that it should claim the right of jurisdiction when its own members only are concerned, is comprehensible, and even quite admissible from the Chinese point of view, which is much the widest, the most tolerant in religious and national concerns, that is to be found among an organized people. But that this colony should lay claim to dictate its foreign laws to the authorities which are its hosts, and impose

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upon them their visitors' way of seeing, is too arrogant even for the extraordinary placidity of the Chinese. Here then we see the Chinese at a disadvantage in his own home, compelled to seek his rights from the official protector of the stranger, who will give sentence according to legal principles which he does not know, and is certainly not bound to know, who questions him in an unknown language, and who judges not only in a manner fundamentally arbitrary, the full elucidation of a case being impossible under these conditions, but, further, in the interest of the party under his protection, with a partiality so much the more inevitable because the dignity of the foreign nation represented would suffer disastrously in relation to that of its rivals if one of its members came to be in the wrong.

Partiality in affairs of this kind has not only the odious character which is inherent in all caricatures of justice ; it demonstrates with an impudence as crude as it is imprudent that might overrules right, that it is military supremacy, the influence of the foreigner over the Manchu Dynasty, which renders the sham of pacific organization possible, which bears all the stigmata of the administration of a vassal people by a victorious enemy. The Chinese were not long in penetrating the abuse of this hybrid institution. And the silent wrath felt by those who had allowed themselves to be caught in the machinery of this autonomy of colonists was directed at the beginning in a quite spontaneous manner much less against the dynasty which had authorized and upheld this revolting state of affairs, than against the foreigners who had succeeded in imposing it. There are strong reasons for believing that the Chinese would in the end have

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habituated themselves to the partiality of the extra-territorial tribunal, as they laugh at the arbitrary proceedings of their own magistrates by avoiding them, if it had been made possible for them to do so. But it was useless for them to refrain from preferring complaints against the foreigners, even when they were in the right, for there were always Europeans to bring actions against the Chinese, even and above all when they were themselves in the wrong ; and they pleaded before their representative, and summoned the Chinese, incapable of understanding what was going on, before a tribunal in which the suit was judged without being known, by a rigorous application of the terms of Western codes created for a social life essentially different from the life of China.

VII

Criminal Exploitation of the extra-territorial Privilege by Western Commerce

THE divergences between the European codes and Chinese morality were soon the actual battlefield of the unscrupulous "pioneers of civilization," who replace the brute force of the brigands of the Middle Ages by a cowardly cunning which evades responsibilities. The creditary system of Chinese exchange, the absence of a fixed standard, the habit of verbal contract and of the cheque drawn on a spoken signature,—all these practices, which dominate the economic life of China and have no existence in Western jurisdiction, might serve for dealings with the Chinese, from the Chinese point of view, so long as the hope remained of judging him afterwards by European standards. Thus the extra-territorial jurisdiction was not only an outrage and an act of insolence: it became organized crime. The European accepted verbal engagements and did not carry them out. In vain did the Chinese then offer to take an oath on the freshly cut off head of a cock, ✓ as is their habit under similar circumstances; the Chinese authorities could only declare themselves incompetent, and advise their countryman to take his case before the consular tribunals. But here he was

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asked for documentary evidence establishing the authenticity of his claims, such as are demanded in Europe ; and as the Chinese had naturally not thought of taking precautions in his own country, which are as a matter of fact unknown, but which the European does not fail to observe in a similar case, his plea, however well founded it may have been, was judicially null.

The mistake of the Chinese in believing the foreign institutions to be regulated by principles analogous to their own, was so much the easier to make, because in certain other aspects the Europeans had, in the hope of easier and more considerable gains, affected to make concessions to the Chinese spirit. It was a fairly general custom to change names in a manner agreeable to Chinese ears by taking into account the fact that the exact pronunciation of most European proper names is a thing impossible for the uncultivated Chinese. Sometimes they were contented with abbreviations leaving only the first syllable simplified ; sometimes each syllable was given a termination for better or worse, and of Meyer was made Meï-li-tse, of Smith Si-meï-tse, of Dubois Ti-pow-a. Very often the Chinese gave, and the Europeans tacitly accepted, appellations which had no connexion with the original name. When great commercial houses were concerned for social reasons this became a new and universally recognized title which took its place as well in the European registers as in the Chinese reports ; in these cases there were no inconveniences. But when an isolated foreigner found himself provided with a secondary and entirely re-fashioned appellation, the result was absolutely to exclude any possibility of further identification, and this became a new source of mortification for the Chinese. A man named Martin,

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for example, known among the Chinese of his circle as Ta-ti-kong, will remain necessarily undiscoverable when a complaint is laid against him, Men would offer to take an oath that this is the man, but is that a proof? Anybody may be called Ta-ti-kong; and even if the Chinese authorities (who would take good care not to do so in their fear of diplomatic difficulties) should give evidence, for example, that the so-called Martin signed a contract, Ta-ti-kong, the consular tribunals would be in no way held to believe it. A European called Ta-ti-kong is unknown, and there is an end of it. And the Chinese who should venture to insist on the veracity of his denunciation would run a considerable risk of being charged with blackmailing by way of false accusation. European names provided with Chinese forms are only a very fallacious means to captivate the goodwill of the Chinese. The case is almost the same with certain other concessions which the Europeans make externally to Chinese civilization, concessions more or less necessary for success, above all in districts withdrawn from the great centres of international trade and in places where a very small number of Westerns reside in the midst of masses of Chinese.

The habit adopted by many of those who have need to maintain as close relations as possible with the Chinese population, and which consists in wearing the pigtail and being clothed in Chinese costumes, makes us involuntarily think of the wolf in sheep's clothing. Those who act thus cannot even invoke in support of their activity the civilizing principle, which insists on the propagation of ideas, habits and technical superiority among less advanced peoples with the object of raising their condition. They do exactly the

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contrary, they pretend to put themselves on the same level with those whom they intend to exploit. The ideal of Western civilization enters into the conduct of these colonizers only just so far as it permits them to give an external justification to their proceedings, and so far as modern technical inventions applied to the natural riches of the country, but not put at the disposal of the indigenous producers, can grant a glimpse of particularly brilliant industrial and commercial returns. There is no spreading of civilization ; there is a search for gain ; and all that the European civilizers do to increase their gain serves at the same time to diminish the dignity of their civilization.

When the not uncommon concupiscences of these pioneers of Europeanism are still more openly revealed, we may detest them, but we explain them to ourselves by the business spirit which is simply transferred from Europe to the Far East. But what is more serious is that this covetousness, with its horrible train of odious, base and reprehensible proceedings, comes to light most conspicuously, not among those who set forth on colonial adventures with the avowed hope of enriching themselves by exploitation, but among those who hypocritically give themselves the airs of spreading ideas which are exactly the opposite of the spirit of business ; among those who claim for themselves under this head an authority, an importance, an immunity, far above that of the lay and commercial missionaries ; among those who, skilfully backed up by the Western Government, impose themselves on the Chinese and betray at the same time their pretended religion, the confidence of their native countries, the benevolence of their new surroundings, and the success of their lay countrymen.

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The consequences of the extra-territorial system of Europeans, serious as they are, are never manifested with such dazzling illumination as in certain scabrous affairs conducted by Christian missionaries.

In the history of the missions there are examples so typical, so beautiful (from the point of view of our inquiry), that they epitomize the situation better than the most minute theoretical statement. The following case, which can serve as a prototype, dates from the beginning of the year 1900. Its hero, one S——, a Protestant and American, would be only too happy to be mentioned by name.

This American, being the head of a large mission on the Chen-si, formed the idea of enriching himself at a single blow. As, in the knowledge of everybody, he had the disposal of great financial means, he was able to buy without difficulty silk to the value of about £8,000. This silk he bought according to Chinese usage, that is to say, on a verbal contract of three months. The silk being delivered, he sent it to Tientsin, despatched it to San Francisco, and sold it at a profit of at least fifty per cent. When the three months of his verbal contract had run out, he omitted to pay. The creditors proposed a prolongation of the three months at the relatively low rate in China of one and a half per cent. per month. The good Christian accepted the offer, but that did not prevent him from failing to pay when the bill fell due.

To the repeated demands of the creditors he opposed a flat refusal. They applied to the tribunal, and pledged themselves to establish by evidence, oaths and the rest what everybody knew. The tribunal could only declare its incompetence owing to the fact

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that missions are extra-territorial ; the case ought to be brought before the Consular Court at Tien-tsin. The missionary had the prudence to remain shut up within the walls of his concession ; and in this way he escaped the assassination which in so many other cases has justly intervened to supplement official justice. The creditors, urged by the tribunal of their own town to keep quiet, sent their case to Tien-tsin, that is to say, to a place five hundred miles from the spot.

The Consular Court at once asked, as a defender of the real civilization, for the signatures of the missionary. These not being in existence, he nonsuited the creditors, and brought a denunciation against them before the Chinese Ministry of Justice, on the charge of attempted blackmailing.

The unhappy men were absolutely and entirely robbed ; they swore that they would never again be caught in the same way. The consequence was that the mission was more or less boycotted, business no longer progressed, and the hostility of the population against the Christian civilizers was manifest. What was to be done ?

The missionary addressed a complaint to his Embassy saying that the respect of the population for the mission was absolutely wanting, that the mission was boycotted and almost in a state of siege, that the purchase of goods encountered an obstinate *non possumus* of the Chinese merchants,—in short, that the situation was critical. The embassy summoned the Government to intervene, and the latter, under diplomatic pressure, could do nothing but send to the Governor of the district in question an energetic missive declaring him responsible for the situation in the event of the perpetuation of this state of affairs.

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Thereupon compulsory resumption of the brigandage of the mission, and triumphant despatches from Peking announcing that the energy of the diplomatists had once again succeeded in saving an important mission in danger of being attacked by Chinese robbers.

The missionary made a fortune. When the Boxer troubles broke out he got away in good time, carrying off all his treasures, killed a sheep, stained his mantle of blue silk with blood, scratched his head to get credit for a wound, and went off across Mongolia while preparing a moving story of his flight, which he proposed to noise abroad in the form of a lecture in the principal towns of the United States at a charge of sixpence admission.

It is necessary to insist on the fact that events of this kind are not at all unique nor even rare. And it is, above all, important to estimate the intensity of the disagreeable impression that such cases cannot fail to make upon the Chinese population; and that all the more strongly, if they are to be imputed, not to the adventurous spirit of exploiting traders, but to the hypocrisy of Christian priests who claim to be spreading religion and Western civilization from a spirit of charity towards pagans.

VIII

The Christian Missions as religious Agents. Religious Toleration among the Chinese. Christian and Chinese Morals. Impossibility of the Christian Dogma in China. Chinesisation of the Christian Cults. Rivalry between the Christian Sects

IN Europe we have for a very long time refused to believe in the not altogether elevated character of Christian activity in the Far East.

Before the too rapid development of Western industry, when the question of trans-oceanic exportation did not yet exist as a vital question for the great European States, the idea of propagating the Christian faith for disinterested reasons could still rise up in the heads of fanatics with some plausibility, and so long as Christian missions exercised this activity in China in the purely spiritual domain, so long as the priests acted there as they act here when they endeavour to make proselytes, their action had nothing reprehensible in itself from the Chinese point of view. They sought to influence the soul of the people, in so far as it is not subject to the practical preoccupations of every day. Religious sentiment and even exaltation are never anything but a personal matter, and the millenary wisdom of Chinese policy

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leaves absolute liberty in this point of view to all the weaknesses of the condition of the popular soul.

Religious tolerance is complete in China ; complete so long as it does not involve consequences unpropitious to the progress of economic or political business. And there is in fact no country in the world where the most incompatible systems of beliefs have been able to live side by side with so much mutual peaceful consideration as in China. From the coarsest popular superstitions to the sublime dreams of the metaphysical atheist, from the most absurd cults to the most refined aesthetic symbolization of life, all degrees in the quality and intensity of religious sentiment are observed dominating the psychic life of individuals who in their social life invariably show the stereotyped character of the life of the masses. And on the other hand the great religious systems which, by erecting that entirely personal thing called religious sentiment into a final dogma, aim at forming jealous and rival communities such as Confucianism Buddhism, Judaism, Islamism, and also Christianity, have been able for long ages to restrict their influence so closely to the domain of sentiment that China affords the unique spectacle of a country where all the religions have lived side by side without any difficulty during immense periods which were characterized in all other parts of the world by the most terrible and insane religious wars.

This tolerance, so calculated to astonish and shame Indo-Europeans, evidently has to do with a natural disposition of the race ; which is, however, quite different from that which is readily attributed to it by Europeans in noting the failure of their Christian propaganda. The Chinese is by no means incapable

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of being penetrated by supra-terrestrial ideas, or of feeling the suggestive beauty of mysteries, symbols, abstractions, and transubstantiations which are the property of the Indo-European religions. The absolute, palpable proof of this, even if there were no psychological evidence, is that Buddhism, the most complicated system in this aspect, and Islamism, which demands a rigorous abstract discipline, reckon their adherents by tens of millions.

The Chinese is, on the contrary, superior to the European as to his capacity for ecstatic sentiments. The nervous characteristic which distinguishes him, is susceptibility to suggestion on which, as we have seen, his social system entirely reposes. He is sensitive to the unconscious ascendancy of his surroundings with unusual facility. He is the perfect raw material to fill up the skeleton of a community. He is the prototype of gregarious man. As such he is the perfect sectary, as under other conditions he is the perfect citizen or the perfect man of business. For he enjoys this considerable advantage, common to those under hallucination and those who are sovereignly masters of themselves, of possessing his mind in independent compartments, and of being able to pass from one occupation to another, from one domain of ideas to another, and from one system of judgements to another, not only without any difficulty, but, further, while feeling himself at any moment free from all ties with different psychical conditions.

Thus it is that his religious sentiment is easily manifested in quite different fashions on different occasions. The strength of conviction which is the boast of the European and for which he suffers martyrdom is a thing totally incomprehensible to

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the Chinese. He lets himself follow the inspirations of the moment settled by the suggestion of the environment to which he is exposed.

Now without strength of conviction intolerance is no longer possible. Therefore attachment to one or another religious system has never been able to become in China a question which might influence the more or less amicable relations between different individuals or groups.

That is why the Christian propaganda undertaken by European missionaries has never carried anything in itself which could have stirred the hatred of the Chinese. If in spite of all efforts this propaganda has been blessed with only moderate success, the reason is that with the Chinese the sentimental need for appropriating Christian beliefs has, so to say, never made itself felt. The reason for this is stated easily enough.

Christian missionaries have from all times given prominence to the superiority of Christian morality in endeavouring to convert populations capable of reasoning with ever so small a degree of logic, so as to win acceptance for the faith from which, if we are to believe them, the stream of morality would flow; and all the successes which the Christian propaganda has obtained in the course of centuries have been based on the sophism which promised the pagans the benefits of a morality made for the lowly by the lowly, and showed them a glimpse of happiness beyond a life wherein there was little or none. But successes of this kind were *à priori* impossible among the Chinese. Having experienced for thousands of years the teaching of Lao-tse, Confucius, and Buddha, they had no need of a moral system, which was only

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a special adaptation of this for the use of the lowly. Christianity had to conquer by the suggestive force of its faith, by its dogma ; or it had to consent with resignation to play the part of the countless sects which vegetate in China, as everywhere else where religious toleration is complete.

Now Christianity, superfluous in so far as it was a moral system of charity, was bound to be seen as impossible, ridiculous and odious as dogma. The principle, though not quite explicit dogma, contained in the canonical Scriptures, is the anarchic principle—perfect equality of each individual in the presence of the Lord God. This is the principle which the Christian dogmatic system serves to support. It is well understood that in Europe the principle has disappeared, while the body of dogma has remained ; but it is not easy to deny that Christianity, as an organization, was only able to develop itself in its origin in consequence of the adoption of the principle of equality among the immense majority of “coolies” who peopled the Roman Empire. And it is to be remarked that the success of modern missions among peoples called savage rests exclusively upon the hope held by these simple folk, of seeing the principle of equality so hypocritically preached, realized in their environment, which is generally ruled by the brutality of the principle of might and right.

Now, in China the dogma of equality is condemned in advance to remain a vague hypothesis considered with as much mistrust by the whole people as it is in Europe by the leaders alone ; the anti-Christian doctrine of the super-man preached by Nietzsche does not give occasion to so much stupid wrath and laughter in Europe as the Christian principle in China.

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For it is the pure and simple negation of the basis of the whole social life of the Chinese, which is characterized by the principle of the Three Relations. They are in the habit of stigmatizing as a crime everything which is directed against the foundations of their social order, and thus it comes to pass that in China the principles of Christianity could not fail to be considered immoral, subversive and criminal. Respect for the hierarchies, confidence in superiors, the family organization before all, and no less the economic organization, were outrageously discredited by Christianity.

A doctrine which gives man the example of the lilies of the field, which "work not," could only stir the lawful indignation of a people for whom work is, as it were, the supreme sacrament, and in its sound and vigorous realism looks life full in the face without using the spectacles of a wearied decadence. A doctrine whose deified founder ventures to utter this ignoble imprecation to his own mother: "Woman, I know thee not," and whose apostles either reverse in practice all the sacred laws of nature by their celibacy or by marrying and multiplying fail to observe the immediate consequences of the dogma: such a doctrine, contrary to nature, obscene, inept, and blasphemous, was bound to engender the contempt of all the clear thinkers and the deadly mirth of the literate; for it was the negation of the family, the basis and symbol of any possible social life. A doctrine which admits the immortality of the individual soul and in spite of that is not afraid to condemn the cult of ancestors in order to replace it by the no less concrete adoration of the souls of strangers; a doctrine which denies moral differentiation on earth and

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establishes hierarchies in heaven ; a doctrine which had the audacity to abase, to punish, to torture with the fire of an ignobly conceived hell, the relatives, the friends, the great men venerated among the people, to rend the delicate and indispensable bonds which bind the individual to the world of examples and ideals by which he is guided ; a doctrine which had the unclean cynicism to try to snatch each individual from the millenary system of affections and influences whose innumerable threads support him on the stage of life, in order to be able to fish him up afterwards from his despair,—in order to be able to rescue him with the airs of a saviour, when he has put himself outside all that has constituted his mental life, or when he has made himself a criminal by denying the very foundation of the social life of his people ; a doctrine, lastly, which is the gospel of the outcast, and tries to tear individuals from their class in order to reduce them to exclusive obedience to those who preach or claim to preach this gospel, an anarchist religion in the most stable of social systems ; a sentimentality reduced to zero by the principle of equal charity to all men in the nation which is endowed with the most marvellous sentimental differentiation which is to be seen in the world ; a levelling morality among the people which has more than any other the sense of measure for the value of individuals ; and, to conclude, the ethical principle of altruism which started from China, and was stupidly reimported as the supreme justification of missionary activity—this total of psychological and methodological monstrosities could not fail to terrify the people, vex the educated, disturb the patriotic, and baffle the mystics who would have been contented

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in the extra-natural world of the Christian imagination.

The stories of the Bible, beautiful and impressive for the quick imagination of the Chinese, were coarsely disfigured and rendered ugly by the claim to make the social absurdities above characterized either flow from them or be supported by them; from beautiful and comforting poetical fancies, panaceas against care and the dangers of weariness, they became lies destined to render the secular ideals suspect; instead of art this book of stories pretended to be philosophy, and as philosophy was unprofitable and foolish; for being outside all sociological reasoning, it was incomprehensible. The Christian canon is untranslatable into Chinese so far as its metaphysical portions are concerned, and as for its translatable parts they serve a double turn with the canon of the Buddhists.

We may even go further and affirm in a general fashion that all that is religion in China is superfluous from the social aspect, and neology from the emotional aspect; the social principle, that of the Three Relations, is an empirical moral principle based upon pure observation exempt from any religious connexion; and as for the sentimental aspect, religion in the ✓ Western sense of the word is so entirely un-Chinese that it is absolutely impossible to translate into Chinese the primordial religious conception, that of God. ✓

Here again we have one of the profound reasons for the fabulous failure of the Christian missions from the ideal point of view, and of the popular disrepute by which they are pursued. On the contrary, the infiltration of Buddhism, which happened a thousand years ago, took place with marvellous

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facility, although the difficulty of the neologisms was nearly the same. But at that period it was the Chinese people itself, which, from the need of anthropomorphizing ethical principles, sought Buddhism, and itself transcribed, with the help of countless puns, the Indian terminology into monosyllabic characters. To-day, on the other hand, the Chinese has no sense of the need of anthropomorphizing mysteries issuing in great part from linguistic antinomies peculiar to the Indo-European family. So he repels Christianity with contempt as incomprehensible to his mind, since it is untranslatable into his language—as contrary to his life, since it is not conformable to his needs of social organization.

Nothing can be more absurd than to endeavour to convert to a particular faith a nation in which reasoning has long since established the precepts which claim to be derived from that same faith. It is particularly shameless to teach the Christian faith to the Chinese under the pretext of deriving therefrom a civilizing morality, whose principles were established *logically* in China half a millennium before Christianity came into being. The ethical principles of the Chinese people differ in nothing from the principles of Christian morality, and to such a degree is this true that learned Jesuits have been able to undertake *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* to prove by facts and quotations that the Decalogue exists among the Chinese. If in Europe we refuse to recognize this identity of ethical principles, it is by oblivion of the unchangeable truth, as true for China as for Europe, that such general principles are only there to form the ideal counterpoise to the less agreeable manifestations of practical life.

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As those who hold the faith only see what is derived from it, they easily fall into the dangerous error of believing first that these principles must be conscious; secondly, that they cannot be established without the faith; and lastly, that they are essential to human happiness.

Then the fatal egoism which animates those who believe themselves to be the holders of the truth renders them pitifully blind. The Christian missionaries in the first times were doubtless still guided by the idealism of intolerance, and not as yet by the baser but no less savage considerations of politics. This religious conviction brought them to attack a problem whose insoluble character was evident to any impartial observer. They clung to showing God to the Chinese, and, with this aim, stubbornly persisted in seeking, in constructing, in transforming, in inventing, in deducing terms (which, according to the not altogether conclusive opinion of the missionaries themselves) were to suggest the idea of the Christian God.

As the notion did not exist, they were very glad to content themselves with an approximation. But this approximation changed with the idea which each of the propagators formed of God. One voted for Tien-tchou, master of heaven, others believed in God Shang-ti, the emperor on high, a third party, whose patience was exhausted and who did not look too closely, identified Him with Ye-sou, and, when the Scriptures make a distinction between God and Jesus, used sometimes one expression, sometimes another which could evoke the idea of a supreme being, an expression always, however, so badly chosen that the idea suggested was rather that of an old governor-general, or a great magician, than that of a universal

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principle anthropomorphized to be able to approach it by sentiment. Lastly, the discipline which reigns in the well constituted sects of Christianity decreed the consistent use of one expression, with the evident aim of establishing a clear distinction between the different Churches ; and thus came a rivalry of gods as there had been a rivalry of Churches. With the battle cry of Tien-tchiao the Catholics fought with energy and perfidy not only Chinese paganism (a quite illusory combat); but, above all, the English Protestants, who rally to the cry of Ye-sou. The rivalry between the missions of the different Christian sects had, however, only to do with the concrete advantages which can be brought by the greater number of adepts and greater reputation among the unconverted population. But little antagonism was observed from the doctrinal aspect ; it was not a war of religion between the missions, but a war of interests. One would be disposed to believe the contrary, were it not the opinion of the Chinese themselves, who have felt the effect of the propaganda from both sides.

The difference between Catholicism and Protestantism in general does not reside, according to innumerable simple-minded witnesses, in a difference of dogmas or principles ; nor does it reside in a difference of organization, the one erecting an imposing hierarchy with the Pope at its head, the other affecting a liberty of procedure based upon a pretended strength of the individual soul ; the rites of the one not being the only thing which makes the difference in the eyes of the crowd, the difference of cults, for the rest quite external, was not convincing. The manner of life of the missionaries alone forms the veritable difference

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in the eyes of the masses between the sects, whose savage antagonism is clearly felt, but whose distinctive characters are not penetrated. The Protestant priests are married, the Catholic are not. Or, as one often hears said, *the Protestant priests have their wives, the Catholic have to take those of other men.*

This remark would entirely militate in favour of greater sympathy for the Protestants. Now experience shows that on the contrary Catholicism has the greater number of adepts and the greatest influence in China. It would, however, be a gross mistake to believe, as is still the conviction of a large number of Westerns, that this quantitative success is profitable to the power of the Christian religion.

Catholic and Protestant propaganda alike have never served Christianity, precisely because of their desperate rivalry. This internal contest in a religion which claims to be the expression of supreme truth has shown the realist populations of China that this "supreme truth" varies with the interests of each class which claims its authority; and in this way it has cancelled any convincing force in the general principles of Christianity.

The Chinese have been compelled by the missions themselves to make a rigorous distinction between the Christian sects. The Catholics told them that the doctrine of Tien-tchiao, Lord of Heaven, was alone good. The Protestants do not fail to put them on their guard against this error; they assert that only the doctrine of Ye-sou, Jesus, is true. The orthodox Russians mischievously reply to those who question them that Tien-tchiao and Ye-sou are in the like case, that their sects are schismatic, that they do not know what they mean, and that these are "Hsi-

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Kiao," Western doctrines, which have no value, since their holders mutually refute them down to the primordial principles.

This disastrous state of affairs, moreover, does not date from our own days. Five centuries ago an analogous situation lost the Empire of Asia to Christianity, not only in fact, but in right also ; for it might have become the State religion of the immense Empire of the Mongol Emperors who governed more than half humanity, from the Yellow Sea to the Black Sea, from the Sunda Islands to the snowy plains of Russia. In fact, when the great Tchengis-Khan, celebrated, above all, for the sanguinary instincts which his enemies have wrongly attributed to him, had united under his sceptre the whole mass of the country between Pekin and Trebizond, it was stated that the populations spread along the great commercial route which had joined these two cities for centuries had characteristic religious beliefs in common : along this " imperial road " the Christianity of the Nestorians reigned. Nestorianism, which has to-day disappeared, was as opposed to the doctrine of the Roman patriarchs (whence are sprung Catholicism and the Protestant sects) and to that of the patriarchs of Byzantium (whence came Graeco-Slav orthodoxy) the doctrine of the primitive patriarchs of Antioch, who were originally equal in rank with those of Rome and Byzantium. This curious form of Christianity, which for the rest gradually abandoned the foundations of the religion to cultivate nothing but external forms sometimes absurd, sometimes fantastic, finding itself barred in its development towards the West, had applied its whole strength to extending itself across Asia along the commercial routes. And the Asiatic,

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✓ and, above all, the Chinese, showing a toleration in religious matters of which the European in general has shown himself totally incapable up to the present moment, it is not excessively astonishing that in the thirteenth century there was, even at Peking, a numerous Christian community, which possessed its own cathedral and priests of the Chinese race; that the Fathers of Syria enjoyed a considerable influence at the Mongol Court, that at a given moment the greatest enemy of Tchengis-Khan, Ouang-Khan, known by the extraordinary legend of "Prester John," really was a Christian, and that, lastly, Siourkou-kteni, the mother of the greatest monarch that the world has known, Kubla-Khan, fervently practised the cult, which, if we must believe certain chroniclers, was limited at this time to interminable communion feasts, where the sacred wine was drunk in formidable quantities till a complete ecstasy more or less religious was produced. Lastly, and this is quite certain, since Gregory IX, the Roman popes, blinded by the splendour of their power, sent missionaries into Asia, not to rest on the influence of the Nestorians, and thus to annex prudently both this decayed Christianity and the masses hesitating between Christianity and Buddhism, but to preach—the fact would never be guessed—against the Nestorian Christianity itself. This was worse than dropping the meat for the shadow. The Buddhist clergy had thus a new and irresistible weapon. It not only dragged in the mud (which, in fact, was its proper place) the ultra-epicurean, and at the same time unclean, cult of the Nestorians, but it could add with full right that the Christians themselves did not know what they ought to consider true; they were

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fighting among themselves. A century later even the very name of Christian had been forgotten.

Now in the recent period of Christian activity in China the conditions were much less favourable. The anarchist principles of the religion of Christ had on different occasions disturbed the Manchu dynasty to the extent of causing them to interdict rigorously Christian practices as being not merely religious, but also political, and to dissolve and persecute the Christian communities as constituting groups not in conformity with the primordial laws of Chinese society. Christianity, rendered thus suspect at a time when it had in truth as yet none but religious pretensions, was bound to appear directly subversive, when it put itself forward supported by the Western States, greedy of commercial outlets, as a conscious agent of European civilization in general.

IX

The Christian Missions as Agents of European Commerce. The Fight for Converts. The Communities as Secret Societies. Illegal Advantages of the Converts. The Dregs of the People Christian

HERE, it is true, was a fresh source of strength for Christianity, at the time when the uselessness of its morality and the ineptitude of its dogma, recognized by the Chinese, threatened to cause the complete disappearance of the rare disciples of the missionaries. This source of strength was, however, offered to it on condition of abandoning the claim to wish to be an end in itself. All the other systems of beliefs in China are ends, sentimental panaceas, which accomplish their work by increasing the inner comfort of individuals; they are religions. Christianity, on the contrary, was simply identified with Europeanism (how different however!); instead of remaining, in the ancient sense, a supreme end to be reached, it became a simple means of Occidentalism. From a religion it became a policy; from a faith a law; and from a system of morals a trade. And from that moment the Christian missions became from centres of a spiritual propaganda the haunts of a political or economic agitation; and the missionaries, instead of remaining

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austere propagators of ideas, descended, unconsciously at first, but later with the whole shameless turpitude which characterizes our epoch, to the rank of agents of Europeanism and of civilization in the most superficial sense of the word.

When the Christian missions began to play their new part, they were not long in being considered by the Chinese as the advanced guard of the economic or political invasion of Europe, and their religious task, or pretended such, was reduced to a hypocritical practice of the cult which had no longer anything in common with even the most superficial manifestations, such as are observed among other pagan peoples subject to the system of missions. The Christian religion was a special form of trade, and the trade of the missionaries and their adepts, like that of the other extra-territorialized Westerns, a special form of fraud. In consequence of this fact Christianity lost in China the reputation, for the rest inconsiderable, which it had acquired as a religious sect, to exercise an enormous power as a political agent.

This was the salvation of the missions and their adherents, for they had the diplomatic support of the European Powers. The part of political agents completely absorbed them. If they had wished still to work for the glory of Christianity, they would now have had to contend not only with all the difficulties of a psychological nature, set forth above, which opposed its propagation, but further with the legitimate mistrust of a nation which observes the gradual economic encroachment of an invader, an apparently pacific invader, it is true, but so much the more dangerous for the future of its civilization. Under these conditions it is quite natural that, in spite of the political

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support, the religious success of the Christian missions became almost non-existent. It is said—but these are the most favourable estimates made by the heads of the missions themselves—that the number of converts amounts to more than a million. This figure, however considerable it appears at first sight, is, however, the complete proof of the impossibility which confronts Christianity of gradually enfolding the Chinese nation. To-day nobody any longer cherishes illusions on that point. At the outside, in ecclesiastical circles, causes are invented to which this secular check may be attributed, the most serious check which has met the different Christian confessions.

If indeed, after obstinate work for nearly two centuries, undertaken with all the financial, political and moral support that the West could bring to bear, we perceive that the innumerable religious establishments in China all taken together have converted at the outside the fifth part of one per cent of this enormous people, we cannot escape the idea that the considerations which cause it to be believed that the support of the missions is indispensable to the Churches and States of the West must be of a nature other than religious.

Christianity has never in modern times taken so firm a footing that the communities have been able to exist without the protection of the European priests. Certainly there are a limited number of Chinese converts who have received the ordination of Catholic priests, there are even two or three Chinese Protestant preachers, but no Christian community has ever been effectively governed by Chinese; no Christian community has ever had autonomy in the direction of its affairs otherwise than under the direct administration of a European.

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Christianity does not exist without the European ; Christianity only exists as an agent of Europe. And this is the real reason for the bitter and implacable competition between the missions of one sect and those of another ; it is not a rivalry of religions, of truths, of principles ; it is the competition between Europeans with divergent interests.

It must be recognized that in this fight for proselytes (of which the real aim will be set forth later on) the Catholic Missions have won successes singularly greater than those of the Protestants. In fact, these latter have no other means to impose on the minds of possible converts than the reasoned statement of doctrine, the appeal to conscience, and the suggestive force of considerations which already assume a psychical disposition favourable to generalizations of lofty flight. Every practical consideration which might militate in favour of conversion being put on one side, it possesses but little temptation for the Chinese. The Catholic has more means of attraction to put forward ; but, on the other side, the successes won owing to this circumstance differ astonishingly in character from the estimate commonly formed of them in the West. In reality, however, the successes of both alike, even in their effective sphere, have no bearing upon strengthening Western influence by the quite imaginary diffusion of European ideas. Their real function as agents of the Western States is manifested exclusively by their economic activity in the communities once formed.

The secret which gives the Catholic missions the advantage in the formation of these communities is a very simple one.

The Catholic missionaries have, in a word, become more Chinese than the Protestants. In the majority of

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cases they speak Chinese very well. They have, further, this enormous advantage over their rivals, that the Catholic cult, which, as we know, is entirely borrowed from ancient Buddhist rites,¹ offers a striking resemblance to certain religious practices of the country. The veneration of saints, the use of incense, the existence of icons which are the objects of adoration, the non-participation of the congregation in the service itself, the gorgeous character of the cult which creates impressions by its external side above all, and makes no demands upon the worshipper; lastly, confession, and even the idea of transubstantiation borrowed in its entirety from Buddhism: all this was bound not, of course, to make the Christian religion more easily adopted by the Chinese, but to render adhesion to the Christian community more easy to them, inasmuch as the Catholics made very wide concessions, so wide that they ought to convince the most fervent European defenders of the Church that their missions have ceased to be Christian. In the manufacture of icons the principles of Chinese symbolism were adopted, and in the end the churches were peopled with large-bellied saints (the belly symbolizes the soul among the Chinese), with Buddhist and Chinese emblems, with attributes explaining to the Chinese believers the special powers of the idols according to Chinese conceptions. Saint Cecilius playing the Chinese mandoline, Saint Johns with long pigtails, God the Father with an enormous mouth and stomach. God the Son squatting like a frog, the Holy Ghost with a multiplication of arms; this is what is quite Catholic in China. The churches become pagodas, the priests bonzes. They

¹ The contrary view is also held; see Huc and Gabet, *Travels in Thibet and Tartary*. (Translator's note.)

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nearly always wear the costume of Chinese ecclesiastics and often the pigtail.

These are, however, it might be said, quite external expedients adopted to inculcate the Christian spirit more firmly into the people, and it would then be claimed that baptism is the rite which makes the adherents of the missions Christian, and that the rest is of little consequence. Very good : but thus there is an appearance of ignoring the fact that the very ceremony of baptism is of Buddhist invention, of ignoring the fact that a ceremony of this nature is for the Chinese the ceremony of adhesion to any secret society. It is precisely this ceremony which for the Chinese forms the resemblance between a Christian community and all other secret societies, which all pursue objects incompatible with Chinese right, and, *mutatis mutandis*, occupy in China the position held by the Masonic congregations, or, if we prefer the term, the Masonic orders in France.

Above all, there is a pretence of believing that the missions seek to give life to the Christian ideal in the souls of the converts. Now, how would this be possible ? The cult is quite external. If we convert the Chinese, we make him accept the cult ; but at that point the psychological activity of the missionary is arrested. For that matter, the Chinese would not even understand it. Shall the missionary tell him of the splendour of love for one's neighbour ? the Chinese will quote to him a thousand verses from his classics, which yield in magnificence to no passage in the Gospels. If the dogmatic system of the Roman Church is set forth to him, the Chinese will either ask for proofs, or will simply ask, what is the use of it to him. Suppose we wish to prove to him that it is necessary to apply the

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principle of Christian charity, the Chinese will open his hand. And here we come to the essential point.

The entrance of the Chinese into the community is quite an external affair. But this entrance carries with it the disadvantage of being affiliated to an association, which, through the extra-territorial character of the missions extended to their adepts, is outside the Chinese law. For this disadvantage there must be a compensation ; and there is, in the financial support and in the unjust protection of the Embassies, which permits any kind of misdemeanour to be perpetrated without fear of the intervention of Chinese justice.

The Christian propaganda has only met with success in China in quarters where the coarse and palpable manifestation of love for one's neighbour has been able to smooth the paths to the teaching of dogma. It was a question of money ; conversions were only numerous and stable in the cases in which the economic support furnished by the Christians could reasonably cause an admission of the efficacy of the Christian faith. This was not exactly the purchase of souls, but the psychological counter-stroke to the Christian idea that faith produces morality. But all those who reason coldly, and most of those who surrender themselves with docility to the impression of facts, will see in this the absolute proof that it is not faith that is contagious, but economic interest. Doubtless by a reversion of this action there has been formed a certain number of Christians in China, who, thinking that the action was derived from the faith, have embraced the latter from love of the former ; but very often also, where the palpable action ceased to be manifest, the faith fell into disgrace. Christianity has hardly existed in China except as a charity organization. It has never profited

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souls, but it has comforted some of those who were suffering from the social system of their environment.

These indications help us to discover wherein lies the interest of the Christian Churches in supporting their missions in China. As to whether this really is the propagation of the faith, it may be believed at Rome, Paris, Berlin, London, and perhaps even in the Embassies at Peking, which are the places in the world least well informed as to all that concerns China. We may even, as an extreme case, imagine a young missionary, recently arrived, full of prejudices, and ignorant, who believes himself to be working for the greater glory of the God of Catholics and Protestants. But the real missionaries and their directors cannot prove their good faith. The mission, so far as it still wears a religious character, at the most does nothing but hunt proselytes, above all in the presence of rivals of other sects.

Allured by the prospect of forming part of a powerful and rich society which manifests its love of its neighbour (if he is affiliated) in the most concrete form, further seduced by the facility of assimilating the practices of this society, which does not even demand terrible oaths that may entail grave responsibilities, poor men who only ask to launch themselves, bankrupts who would like to raise their credit above justice, thanks to the reputation of the missions, vagrants, in a word, everything that lives on the edge of society, easily allow themselves to be converted. ✓ Quite naturally this community (in China nothing is possible otherwise) becomes, according to the principle of co-operation set forth above, an association far more consolidated on economical than on religious subjects. As for the missionaries, they become, almost in spite of them-

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selves, the heads of this association ; they are its administrative council, and do the work of traders.

The word *society* and not *community*, which is used in most cases to designate the Christian groups in China, is not *tzin-hiang* which is used in the sense of *parish*, but, fairly and frankly, *kong-sze, association*, always employed in the commercial sense, as we find it, for example, in *pao-hsian-kong-sze, assurance society*, etc. The Chinese Christians whom the European politicians would like to take under their protectorate are, in truth, only individuals in a desperate financial situation, who endeavour to raise themselves with the aid of Christian money. This, for that matter, is a fact well known to all Chinese. The missionaries themselves recognize this state of affairs.

Thus it has been possible for cases to occur, monstrous from the point of view of the Christian faith, but tending to edification as to the results of the propaganda. Here is one which I have from a well known missionary, who at the time of the troubles of 1900 escaped from Peking to sow panic as far as Kiakhta.

A little before his departure he was passing a temple ; a band of rebels was shouting cries of death, without, however, attacking him ; he went away without delay after having seen among his insulters a man who was not unknown to him. Meeting him the following day, he said to him : " How can you make common cause with these murderers, you, who are a Christian, you, whom I have saved from bankruptcy three times, and once, by my evidence, from torture ? Is this your faith and your gratitude ? " And the Chinese makes answer : " Venerable father, you are right, a thousand times right ; but what would you have me do ? Soon, when the strangers are no longer among us, what good

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will the Christian faith be to me ? I cannot act otherwise ; things are too strong for me."

We see from this that to a Chinese the difference between a European missionary and a trader of the same race cannot be very great. This fact, as unsatisfactory for the influence of Christianity as for that of Europe, shows on another side to what degree religious phenomena in China depend on social phenomena.

If the missionaries lost their financial action, Christianity would not meet the blow. And if there are facts which show how Chinese Christians have protected missionaries with a touching fidelity, it is not necessary to see more in this than a general feature of the Chinese character—the almost filial attachment of the subordinate to the superior, which is, for the rest, a fundamental law of Chinese society, and forms part of the system of the Three Relations.

Thus is marked the quality of the interest taken by the Churches in the Chinese missions.

From trader to exploiter is but a short step. From association to a band of conspirators is only one step further. From exploiter to criminal is only one step. From conspiracy to a band of criminals the distance is the same. If, over and above this, it is declared that neither the great criminal nor the band of criminals are responsible to the justice of the country, and if, to complete the ignominy, it is publicly decreed that both the one and the other are only responsible to the justice applied by the criminal traders themselves, let us imagine what a European people would do. It would do justice itself. The situation of the missions in China is that of criminal chiefs.

For the rest their character has been depicted a thousand times over. It is the same for the Catholics

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as for the Protestants, with this difference, however, that the Protestants, who cannot assimilate their practices to those of the Chinese, find themselves obliged to work with a little less hypocrisy. The manner of procedure and the nature of the Christian associations in China being once defined, we can explain the extreme excesses of xenophobia to which the Boxers were recently carried ; they are as it were the reply to the ecclesiastical excesses. These last are sufficiently epitomized as to their nature in the two documents which follow.

X

Two Documents upon the Action of the Missions

PPRIVATE letter sent from the town of Chang-tzia-Kau on February 2, 1901, to Mr. Ou-sse-Kong, representative of the house of Pao-tchouan-Chang at the Maï-maï-tcheng of Ourga.

RESPECTED FATHER-IN-LAW,—

By the time at which I am writing this letter you will doubtless have received my two former ones,¹ and you will have learned what lamentable events have struck your family and the whole Chinese people. May heaven give you strength to bear these changes of destiny !

In the whole of the Middle Empire innumerable events have happened similar to those which have afflicted your family. Everything is in a state of anarchy and the position of the people is such that it is not even possible to observe mourning according to the rules of the ritual. It is necessary to go on with business as usual in order not to be afflicted with fresh disasters, and to save what remains to be saved.

Business affairs are necessarily non-existent. The

¹ These have to do with the military part played by the Westerns in the campaign of 1900 ; they are reproduced in chapter xxii.

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military troubles still continue. But the Ous (the Russians) are quickly approaching, it is said, coming from the North-East to re-establish order. Our domestic affairs will, however, seem to you of greater importance.

What remains of your family here is well, although everybody is now reduced to poverty and even beggary. The most important news, however, that I, your loving son-in-law, have to communicate to you is that I have received relatively good news from your distinguished son. The two sheets which are joined to this letter have reference to him.

Some days ago I received from him a letter dated from Hwang-yuan-hsien. It is impossible to send you this letter because I was obliged to forward it to Mr. Yu, the agent of the Pao-cheng bank. But I am going to tell you, respected father-in-law, what your distinguished son writes in this business letter. Then you will see the reasons for which I am addressing you.

Your distinguished son says in his letter that he has told you what happened to him at Tai-yuan. But as you had not yet had news of him in the month of November, it is probable that his letter will not have reached you. At that time he had stayed at Tai-yuan till the time when the Imperial Court, driven from its residence, retired to this town. In spite of the letters of recommendation which he had taken on his departure from Pao-ting, he was not able to find occupation at Tai-yuan. For he was a member of the Big-Fists, as you know, and the banks being in business relations with the missionaries who have resolved to exterminate the Great Society, and can let loose the sanguinary hordes of the barbarians, everybody was afraid to

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employ him. In fact, the armies of the Trans-oceanians were going to follow the road taken by the Court. Further, the Emperor had had a manifesto posted up saying that the members of the Society were to be treated as rebels. This manifesto, which, according to your son's letter, threw confusion into the Society, was happily revoked, but your son thought it prudent to go away supplied with letters of recommendation for Hwang-yuan, where, as you perhaps know, there is an establishment affiliated to the Yulāi Society, which is directed by Mr. Tsien-tai-tchang. Mr. Tsien welcomed him kindly and employed him as agent. The situation of the house, however, became more and more difficult in consequence of the general stagnation of business. Now your son had put into the house as sleeping partner the sum of a thousand ounces which he had been able to withdraw in time from Pao-ting, and he soon perceived that the house was going to suffer bankruptcy, and even in such a way that the creditors would not have been able to be paid in full. Mr. Tsien, who enjoyed a considerable credit, even upon the market of Chang-tzia-Kau, is a man above all suspicion. He was certainly not responsible for the bad state of affairs, and without doubt would not have been able to survive the supreme shame of not being able to pay the liabilities. Your son in the annexed letter, of which I send you a copy, clearly shows that the house was well managed, and that it would have met the crisis with a reserve fund which would have allowed it to pay the current bills, and to wait some months before undertaking anything else. A sum of about five thousand ounces would have been sufficient. Now this fund was in existence.

The copy of the enclosed cheque proves it, and also

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shows the infernal fashion in which the missionaries have cheated the house of it.

Translation of the Cheque.

I, issuer of this cheque, Tsien-tai-tchang, in consequence of extreme necessity instantly demand of the office of the Pao-cheng bank, on the current account that I hold with it, or on the six thousand ounces of silver which belong to me, to pay down to Mr. Ta-li-kong, Catholic missionary, the sum of five thousand ounces of silver.

Given at Hwang-yuan-hsien in Chan-si the 26th year of Kwang-Lu, the third month, the fifth day.

Issuer of this cheque: Tsien-tai-tchang. Signed: Tsien-tai-tchang, banker.

This mean piece of extortion had been perpetrated in the following manner. The missionaries and their chief, Mr. Ta-li-kong had a current account opened with Mr. Tsien for the purposes of their silk trade. But since the Big-Fists had made assaults upon the Trans-oceanians trade was going badly. The missionaries probably foresaw that they were going to be killed, as was just. So they had succeeded in transporting to the sea quantities of merchandise which they paid for by drafts on the house of Tsien-tai-tchang. But their account with this house was exhausted.

The creditors of Mr. Ta-li-kong presented themselves in a body at Mr. Tsien's house. This last declared to them that the current account was exhausted.

They replied that it was on the credit of Mr. Tsien that they had sold on credit to Mr. Ta-li-kong, and that in consequence Mr. Tsien was responsible for the losses which they would suffer if Mr. Ta-li-kong

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refused to pay the drafts himself. The latter naturally refused. The affair was going to be brought before the judge. But the judge declared that this matter was in the province of the judges of Mr. Ta-li-kong's country. Mr. Tsien not wishing to pay for Mr. Ta-li-kong, proved clearly that the account of the missionaries was exhausted. The people were furious with them. So Mr. Ta-li-kong and the other Trans-oceanians decided to go away ; the Big-Fists, in fact, began war, and it was not possible to take the case before the Western tribunal. The missionaries paid a visit to the Governor, and laid the responsibility for everything upon him ; they declared that they would complain to their generals, and that the town would be punished. They also went to see Mr. Tsien, and told him that if the army of the Trans-oceanians came, it would destroy everything, and that they would take care to have him punished in every way if he did not give them the money which was wanted to pay their creditors. Mr. Tsien, fearing the barbarous hordes and the terrible justice of the Westerns, deferred to their wishes, and gave the cheque for five thousand ounces. He was wrong, for the Trans-oceanians did not come into Chan-si ; but could he know it ? Meanwhile Mr. Ta-li-kong went to draw the money of Mr. Tsien from Pao-cheng. But instead of paying the contracts of the creditors he loaded it on carts with the contents of his houses and went away.

Your son says that nothing more has been heard of them. This affair had ruined Mr. Tsien before your son came. But what prevented the house from recovering itself is that the public, indignant, and above all the creditors of the trading missionaries who had not been paid, turned their wrath upon the house of Tsien.

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There was no longer credit nor business. Your son's money, who hoped with his skill to put matters straight, went with the rest.

As there is no longer any possibility of doing business without other support, your son has written to me to make efforts in the Pao-cheng establishment here to get a credit opened for the house Tsien in our town. As Pao-cheng have a preponderant place here, their support would set the business going again at Hwang-yuan also. Your support, my respected father-in-law, would, however, be decisive. I think that your excellent son will not find courage to expose his bad position to you. So I make myself his go-between with you, and, being myself in a very precarious position at present, I venture to propose to you, on behalf of your honoured son, to cause a current account to be opened here with Pao-cheng, so that the Hwang-yuan affair may be settled, even if Pao-cheng refuse to engage themselves in the business. Your example would surely determine them. An account of a thousand ounces would, I think, be enough to set matters going on the right road, and I venture to await your prompt reply to my proposal, for the demands for credit which are coming to the banks from all sides are numerous, and nearly all the cases are similar to those of your distinguished son.

Why does Heaven permit these misdeeds to those who claim to propagate the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven?

But everything comes from Heaven, everything returns to Heaven.

Misfortunes are so many that one cannot describe them. The distress is endless.

Our friend Hsi-fo is sending at the same time a

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letter to Mr. Ta-li, your worthy companion. What he says shows that everybody is being hit by the same misfortunes. Heaven acts thus for consolation ; for "it is seeing the difference between myself and others that makes me sad." I pray for your welfare.

TSIEN-LAO-KONG.

2. Private letter sent from the town of Tchang-tzia-kow, February 2, 1901, to the Licentiate Ta-li, co-administrator of the Pao-tchouan-chang company at Maï-maï-tcheng of Ourga.

VERY RESPECTED SIR AND COUSIN,—

✓ "May the ties of family be stronger than misfortunes." I venture to quote this verse to you before setting forth the object of this letter ; and although I fear that this object may seem to you to go beyond the claims, which the distant degree of our relationship allows to me, I venture to address you because on another side you will be agreeably surprised.

My younger brother is not dead. We were mistaken in thinking so. He arrived at my house nearly ten days ago. He is safe and sound. But in what a condition he arrived ! Stripped of everything, famished, almost without clothes, and after having lost all. His fate and that of his companions were terrible. After more than four months of obscure flight he was able to get as far as this. And as for me, impoverished in the midst of my mourning, ruined, deprived of all by the infernal action of the "Pous,"¹ is it possible for me to help him ?

¹ The word "Pou" is the abbreviation of "Pou-lou," which translates the word "Prussian" into Chinese. By extension it designates here all Germans.

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But before telling you what I venture to propose to you, read, to learn that the misfortunes of my brother are undeserved. Why, however, can Fo permit that his servants should languish under the abominable crimes of the men who propagate the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven? These filthy liars, usurers, contract-breakers, robbers, who are outside the laws, how is it that just Heaven does not punish them?

If my brother has escaped death, the reason is that he is marked out by Destiny. The monastery of Liang-hsien has in fact been destroyed, and everybody has perished, as had already been announced. But all that would not have happened but for those blood-thirsty animals of missionaries. There were in the neighbourhood of the place Protestants and Catholics, rich people whose trade prospered. They had succeeded in making many Chinese enter into their Society, who found thereby considerable lucre, and who profited by the malversations of their Trans-oceanian patrons. The worthy monks, as fervent worshippers of Fo, were afflicted by it, advised the people to avoid these unscrupulous traders, and set the example, as is proper.

When the Society of the Fists of Equitable Harmony proceeded to the punishment of the Trans-oceanian criminals, the monastery became the temple of the good cause for the locality. The monks, as is proper, did not wish for murder. They wanted to drive away the usurers by threats alone.

Their kindness became their poison. The Trans-oceanian armies arrived. The fury of the people increased, and the missionaries went away. But before starting they paid a visit to the venerable prior of the monastery, and, as my brother says, to many people in

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good circumstances ; they expressed their gratitude to the prior for having calmed the people, and promised him on their side to protect the monastery when later the Western army should come to punish the Grand Society ; but they added that in order to ensure his safety they required a thousand ounces of silver with which to bribe the leader of the troops of their country. The prior gave the money. The same day came the others, the Catholics, who repeated the same story, adding that, their country being different, they needed on their side the same sum for the same end. The prior, knowing that Western hordes are irresistible, gave. With many people analogous scenes happened.

Everybody then, although anxious, believed himself guaranteed against the horrors of war. They remained, and nobody hid his property. The monastery contained, besides the venerable library, the personal property of each monk. There were eighty-seven of them.

When the barbarians had occupied the Residence and ravaged the country, they came to Liang-hsien. Two of the missionaries accompanied them as interpreters. Once entered into the town they murdered everybody, pillaged and burned the houses.

Seeing these horrors the prior in haste ordered the gate of the monastery to be closed. They summoned him to have it opened. My brother says that if they had opened it, all would perhaps have gone off well, the missionaries having given their word. Alas ! He was unwilling to believe that the barbarians knew that there was money in the monastery. The prior did not give the order to open. The barbarians fired and then beat in the gate, and the holy men without arms were abominably murdered. My brother, who

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has a weak heart, fainted. They must have thought him dead.

They burned the monastery. The deposit of silver had naturally disappeared. My brother was brought to himself by the heat. The smoke was dense. He could get out, as the barbarians had left the street. He met some citizens who were in flight, and followed them to Tso, where the barbarians had not yet arrived. He had to beg. He fell ill. He paid a visit to the mayor of Tso and told him his story. The magistrate replied that a similar arrangement had been made by him, and that the missionaries had wanted to denounce him as a member of the Society.

When the barbarians came to Tso, the worthy magistrate took flight with my brother. They and many others remained more than two months near Choui-laï in the mountains. Then, several having died of cold, they came down again. They lost their way. My brother in despair took the work of a mule-driver ; thus—by how many windings and dangers !—he arrived here. You must read the ancient romances of the masters to know what he endured.

Much respected cousin, you see what the misfortune of my brother is, who is honourable as a priest. He would like to start for So-ping to enter the monastery there. Now he and I are deprived of everything. So I venture to ask you, seeing the frightful situation in which we are, to lend two hundred ounces on the usual conditions, which I will pay back on the resumption of my business. Your cheque will save the life and dignity of my brother. I shall devote all my gratitude to you.

I am glad that you do not suffer from the misfortunes which afflict us, and I pray for your health.

Hsi-Fo.

XI

The Missions as principal Provokers of the Xenophobia

WE may draw from the sense of these letters two important conclusions. First, in so far as they are documents, they do not deal with solitary events; they do not constitute an exception; they are rather the expression of the mean term of very numerous analogous facts. Then from the political point of view they prove the defect inherent in the existence of the missions, and bring to light the measures indispensable to save the little rags of reputation compromised by them, a reputation which the Western Governments might still save.

It would be rash to cast doubt upon the good faith of the immense majority of the Christians of Europe and America, whose sympathies go to the missionaries. At the same time the diplomatists, the governors, and the great industrial and commercial houses, who are all preoccupied only with interests more or less material, are doubtless convinced that the work of the missionaries was indispensable to prepare the economic or political influence of their respective countries.

But everybody has been deceived, deceived by

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the prejudice in favour of European superiority ; deceived by the blind fear of soon not having enough outlets for Western industry ; deceived by the national vanity, which at any cost supports anything which in one sense or another can relegate a rival to a second place ; deceived, lastly, by the European diplomatists at Peking, who, knowing neither the language, nor the institutions, nor the situation of the country in which they find themselves, let themselves, with a happy simplicity, be enlightened by the missionaries themselves. That is the source of the evil. We must send to Peking not little cabinet chiefs or retired sub-lieutenants of dragoons, but men of learning ; before all, we must no longer consider Peking as one of the first stages in a career, but as the most elevated post, the most difficult, and the most honourable. Such a reform would do wonders. But perhaps it is already too late.

It is not true that the missionaries have propagated the influence of their mother countries in China. Even to exist the missionaries are compelled to abandon their dress, their language, their habits to such a degree that the Chinese hardly ever knows to what nationality they belong. Besides, he does not even know the European nations. To spread, for example, French influence,—would not that be to make France more respected than other countries ? But suppose that France is indistinguishable by the Chinese from the other Western nations ? The work of the missions for the reputation of their native countries goes for nothing.

It is not true that the missions have in general propagated in China the pacific influence of the West. Of whatever nation they were they have never been

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able to win respect for European institutions, because the latter left more to be desired than the Chinese. European right only guaranteed impunity to criminals; the habits of the Westerns only brought into light coarseness, brutality, barbarous ignorance; the men of the West only satisfied the less respectable appetites; the faith of the West was only the faith in the success of scabrous affairs; the science of the West only served to exploit the people; the tongues of the West only served to discuss business and to lie.

It is not true that the missions have propagated Christianity in China. The Chinese, heir to the sublime thoughts of a Confucius or a Lao-tse, has no need for a morality founded on faith. He has no need of incomprehensible dogmas. No more does he want a morality which permits him to act contrarily to the notions of right which he already holds, still less dogmas which make him the vassal of an association which is on the margin of society. The Chinese Christians seem to him to be traitors who sell morality for a temporary and illicit profit.

It is not true that the missions have prepared the way for the economic invasion longed for by Western capital. They have closed it. They wanted to keep for themselves the profits of this invasion. In doing so they completely discredited the commercial processes of the West. Their legal extra-territoriality, which has led them to enrich themselves fraudulently, has brought into being that profound popular conviction that no Western deserves confidence; now in China confidence in the spoken word rules commerce. But they have partly made known to the Chinese the technical appliances of our civilization. They have thus precipitated the inevitable develop-

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ment which will one day make Europe the outlet for Chinese industry. Peaceful traders alone working individually (like the Russians in the north) would have been able to do a useful work; professional traders would have resisted with less difficulty the temptations of extra-territoriality, and they would not have had enough influence upon their Governments to place themselves outside the sphere of Chinese justice.

It is not true that the Missions have raised the intellectual level of China. If there are Chinese who have learned to read and write (Chinese, of course), thanks to the missionaries, they were the outcasts who fifty years ago made the Tai-ping revolution; they are at present in a country where public instruction is nearly as well organized as among ourselves, people who come from nobody knows whence, who go nobody knows whither, and who as a quantity no less than as a quality are negligible.

It is not true that the missions are the army of a peaceful occupation. They are their agents, they alone (apart from the mysterious Russo-Thibetan conspiracy, of which I shall speak further on) who prepared the military invasion of the European hordes in 1900. History proves it.

It is not true that the missions are the indispensable agents of Western influence for the future. The contrary is the truth. It is they who, in the eyes of the people, brought about the disasters of the last few years. But even if their past was less open to reproach, the condition of mind of the people ought, in the very interests of the West, to lead the Governments not only not to support, but to suppress, at least for some time, the Chinese missions.

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Now in presence of the historical facts which make the missions the real obstacle to peaceful trade between the West and China, this measure is of the very first necessity. If it is not taken, the Governments which protect the missions will see themselves—and it is the Chinese who say so—forced at no long interval to embark upon fresh military enterprises of colossal scope which will bring them into collision with the new official protector of Thibetan Buddhism, the Czar.

The Government which will leave the protectorate of the missions to a rival will be sure to get the better of that rival.

It is not true that the missions must be supported in the interests of humanity in order not to abandon the Chinese Christians. These Christians, massacred in numbers, not for their faith, but for having taken advantage of the unjust extra-territoriality of the missions, have abandoned Christianity more easily than the missionaries abandoned their trade. There are abundant proofs of this. And those who remain Christians by conviction, if there are any, have no need either of foreign priests or of extra-territorial protection.

A State religion does not exist in China. All the religions live there side by side. Toleration is complete. But religion must not dispense itself from submission to the law. If the missionaries had never pursued any objects but the propagation of the faith, the population would never have risen against them. But by the actual confession of official personages (is it believed—no doubt it is—that nobody reads in China ?) the missionaries are the pioneers of Western civilization.

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Let them be replaced for the future, first, by men of learning, then by merchants who will be fully informed on all that affects their difficult enterprise.

It is not true that the missions must be maintained and protected officially because to abandon them would constitute an enormous material loss. The profits of exploitation by missions have been fabulous. The extortions and pillage of recent times must be reckoned in. They receive further, by force of lies and (it must be admitted) abominable machinations, fantastic indemnities.

Let these spoils be assured to them on the express condition of their never returning to China; the money thus spent would bring in high interest—moral, material and political interest—to the country which should venture on such a policy.

It is not true that European dignity demands the maintenance of the missions. Dignity demands that no solidarity should be asserted with an institution which, without the knowledge of its protectors, has committed innumerable misdeeds and brought about a world-wide crisis.

Lastly, it is not true that the Christian missions have, in any degree whatever, accomplished one of the tasks which their Western patrons imposed on them. Religion, civilization, activity and conception of life, have been lowered in reputation, calumniated, disarmed, rendered ridiculous by these inglorious pioneers, who have caused the loss of half a century to the expansion of the ideas and power dear to Western capitalism.

It is certain, on the other hand, that, apart from the incompatibility of civilizations and the multiplied annoyances and disadvantages which the Chinese

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have had to undergo at the hands of the European colonizers, annoyances which would have gradually disappeared with a more intimate mutual penetration if the Western had been obliged to live in China by his own strength, and not by the constant protection of unsympathetic public powers ; it is certain that the missions have been the true, the last and the strongest cause of xenophobia in China.

One single condition, *sine qua non*, ought to have been fulfilled to avoid the birth and increase of this state of mind so deadly for the Western : the abolition of extra-territoriality, the submission of everybody—missionaries, merchants, travellers, all, with the exception of diplomatic personages—to Chinese jurisdiction. Then we should have seen whether the religious missions are really religious, whether the commercial missions really trade, and whether Europe is capable of proving superior to China by the force of her own work. In the history of civilizations the victories of States signify more often than not defeats by the civilization of the vanquished.

Chinese xenophobia is not then in a general way to be imputed to an unsympathetic feature in the national character. The existence and the aspects of the popular intimacy between the Chinese and numerous other Asiatic peoples, but above all that which comes to pass (as has been described) between the Chinese of the North and the Russians, prove this more than abundantly. The xenophobia, which is readily represented as being in a manner ineradicable in the Chinese temperament, is thus shown to be nothing but deep though just hatred on the part of the invaded for the invader, of the exploited for the exploiter, of the believer for the pro-

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faner : so many claims for sympathy with the Chinese and antipathy against the Western. Xenophobia, or rather hatred of the Western, constitutes among the Chinese of to-day one of the ideal forces which, decorated with sounding names, such as patriotism, nationality, race, conscience, soul of the nation, make, according to what we are told, the power and moral greatness of the West.

XII

The Russian Instrument in China : the Buddhist Clergy

THE stupendous drama which is called the Chinese question, and therefore the tragi-comic episode of these last years, is entirely the resultant of the collaboration of the two forces which have just been analysed—the Russian expansion towards the Pacific, and Chinese popular resistance to the economic invasion of the West. Between these two forces, exposed in an equal degree to the action of each of them, was an institution powerless in itself, but which had acquired a capital importance by the rebound of these two activities—the Manchu Dynasty of the Ta-Tsing.

It has been explained that this dynasty has to reckon with the dread of Europeans felt by the people, that in consequence it has to affect a hostility, rather compulsory than convinced, with regard to the West, and that on the other side the interested friendship of Russia was ensured to the dynasty so long as it should hold the West removed from the future spheres of Russian activity. The fact that the continuous encroachment of Russia on the territorial rights of China has in no respect hindered the good understanding between the Czar and the Hoang-Ti has found its explanation, on the one hand, in the totter-

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ing attachment of the Chinese people to the Manchu Dynasty, on the other hand in a common mistrust of the West.

Given the entirely passive position of the Manchu Dynasty between the Russian influence and the Chinese nationalist influence, Russia ran a serious risk, when the time came, of having the dynasty for her and the whole of China against her.

From the point of view of Russian imperialism the reverse was to be desired. To gain the Chinese, however, meant making the xenophobia and anti-dynastic national feeling both work for Russia, an idea monstrous to the degree of madness, but which, as events show, was perfectly realizable. And more than this: there was a possibility of at the same time preserving the friendship of the Manchu Dynasty, of drawing it into the Russian plan of action, and of utilizing it as a last means of resistance to the concupiscence of the West. The execution of a plan so audaciously conceived was bound to be extremely complicated. It will be our task to disentangle the different phases and aspects of this stupendous drama, in order to arrive at a complete understanding of the Chinese question.

The powerful instrument that Russia has been able to employ in this vast machination is a factor in the life of the Far East which has hitherto totally escaped the notice of the West: this factor is the Buddhist clergy.

The religious conditions of China are, in the complete absence of any organization on the part of the State, complex to such a degree that we easily abandon the task of discovering among them vast organizations which call up the memory of the great Indo-

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European communities. The religious tangle seems to be inextricable. The juxtaposition and multiple interweaving of the ancient animism with the symbolizations and deifications of the disciples of Confucius and Lao-tse, the whole threaded up with countless more or less obscure conceptions of the cult of ancestors ; and this pile of beliefs, superstitions, principles, and imaginations, overlaid with a Buddhism only superposed at a late time, a religion which, thanks to the suppleness of its mythology and the breadth of its dogmas, infiltrated everywhere with remarkable rapidity ; all this amorphous mass of religious ideas was bound to cause belief in an absence of any system, any discipline, any order, from the ecclesiastical point of view. In so far as Buddhism specially is concerned, arriving in China in the last instance through Thibet, this religion had adapted itself to the Thibetan psychology before undergoing a second transformation by the Chinese popular mind ; and it has little resemblance with the Buddhism of India. It must be recognized that the Chinese Buddhist, and even the Buddhist priest in China, have, with some rare exceptions, no knowledge either of their community of ideas with the Thibetans, or of the virtual dependence upon a supreme spiritual authority of Buddhism which is enthroned in Thibet. But it was a clumsy mistake to conclude, as has been generally done, that the Buddhist clergy do not exist in China, because China does not take any account of them. It is enough that they are taken into account in the higher spheres of the Thibetan ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The fact is that with the enormous distances, the slow communications, the difficulties of language,

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the differences of conceptions, and the ignorance of history and geography, the influence hailing from Thibet has, in order to reach the simple Chinese bonzes and their disciples, to traverse so large a number of stages, pass through such different heads, that with the carelessness which characterizes mental activity in Asia it finds itself manifoldly transformed, adapted to the narrow personal view of each individual believer, deprived, in a word, of the authoritative force inherent in the manifestos of supreme heads.

These last being unknown, their existence even remaining obscure to inferior authorities, the ideas or opinions sent forth by the higher spheres reach the Chinese people, not as words of authority, but as vague suggestions, which come from nobody knows whence, which are propagated like the fruits of the imagination of the people, which make their triumphant appearance in the state of public opinion, or the "voice of the people," and whose ascendancy over the mind of the masses is so much the more considerable as their origin is mysterious.

It is probable, it is even certain, that the Chinese authorities themselves, even in the highest spheres, only take very vaguely into account the formidable strength and even the existence of this clerical influence.

The history of the Ta-Tsing Dynasty ought, however, to have taught them as to this dangerous reality ; unfortunately it is the dynasty in person which, since its accession, has given itself over to the ostrich policy in ignoring, and in hiding from others, its precarious situation in face of the Buddhist clergy.

Thus it happens that the very title of the Dalai-

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Lama is unknown in China ; that the vicar of this Buddhist Pope at Peking, the Tchangtcha Khou-touktou, plays a part there entirely mysterious to everybody ; and that in consequence everybody, except perhaps the heads of the dynasty and the highest statesmen, agree with the Europeans informed from Chinese sources in denying that the influence of the Dalai-Lama has ever existed in the dominions of the Ta-Tsing Dynasty.

The truth is very nearly the contrary ; indeed, the Chinese masses, above all in the provinces of the North and West, allow themselves to be unconsciously guided by clerical inspiration, and the dynasty depends in a truly pitiable fashion upon the theocratic oligarchy of Lhasa.

It will be necessary to establish this but little known state of affairs, in order afterwards to explain the nature of the Russo-Thibetan collaboration in the direction of affairs in China.

XIII

The Situation of the Manchu Dynasty in relation to the Clergy. The Institution of the Dalai-Lama-Thibeto-Chinese Relations. Thibeto-Russian Relations

THE history of the Ta-Tsing Dynasty is entirely dependent on the history of the spiritual authority of Lhasa.

Buddhism had already been constituted for several centuries as a ruling Church in Asia, when shortly before the arrival of the Manchu Dynasty in China it became the arbiter of the most important questions raised on the great continent.

The doctrine of re-incarnation, which determines that supreme heads of the Church are Buddhists returned to earth, had already given occasion to the institution of two Popes in Thibet, men-gods of equal sanctity, one of whom, the Pantchan-Lama, incarnated the wisdom, the other, the r'Gyamtso-Lama, the administrative genius, presiding over the fortunes of the Church. Strong in such a superhuman government, and in a clergy which was the pick of the nations in which Buddhism reigned, the Church had gained a deep influence over the soul of some hundreds of millions of Asiatics.

Now here we have the decisive fact which was to

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dominate even the singular events of the present time : the Manchu Dynasty could not instal itself, and could not subsist in China except by the influence of the Church. This truth, so novel in the eyes of Western historians, is worthy of being historically established.

The Ming Dynasty, installed on the Imperial throne of Pekin by the revolution which had driven out Toghan-Timur, the last of the posterity of Tchengis-Khan, could not maintain its authority in the interior beyond the time at which its Confucian and Nationalist principles came into conflict with those of the Buddhist Church, which had arrived at supreme power through the dynasty of the great Mongol Emperor. Further, bitter dissensions occurred in the bosom of the Ming Dynasty, and from the middle of the sixteenth century their governing force was restricted to internal affairs.

This state of feebleness immediately gave rise to fresh ambitions on the part of the great Mongol princes, descendants of Tchengis-Khan. The principal representative of this illustrious family, Altan-Khan of the Ordos, had united under his sceptre the majority of the Mongol race by the political labour of half a century ; he dreamed of re-establishing his dynasty on the throne of China. Doubtless, remembering the marvellous advantages which his ancestor Khubla-Khan had derived from the help of the Church, and well informed as to the situation in China, it seemed to him indispensable to conciliate the immense authority of the r'Gyamtsö-Lama, theocratic king of Thibet and supreme head of the Church. He offered to him to consecrate his spiritual dignity politically by designating him spiritual Lord of all the faithful, and asked in return the title of *Lord and Protector of the Gifts of Religion*, which is almost equivalent to that of universal

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Emperor of the Buddhists. The r'Gyamtso-Lama of Lhasa acquiesced. He was invited to the court of Altan-Khan. The nephew of the latter, Ssetsen-Khungtäidji, conducted him thither with the greatest honours. There was a magnificent festival, at which, it is said, more than one hundred thousand persons were present. The Khan conferred on his guest the sounding title of Vadjradhara-Dalaï-Lama, Ocean-Lama Holder of Thunderbolts ; at the banquet which followed the ceremony of investiture, this historic event of world-wide importance was consecrated by a fine speech delivered by Ssetsen-Khungtäidji.

He expressed himself in the following fashion : “ In consequence of previous blessings we see here the Lama as real object of adoration, and the Khan as Lord of the Gifts of Religion, like the Sun and Moon, when they rise together in the blue and cloudless sky. By the order of Hormouzda, Prince of the Gods, our ancestor, Ssoutsou-Bogdo-Djinghhiz-Khagan, grouped under his sceptre the five colours of his own people and the four kindred peoples. His two grandsons, the re-incarnation of the Buddha Godan-Khaghan, and Khoubilaï-Ssetsen-Khaghan, who turned the thousand gilded wheels of dominion, placed at the head of the spiritual administration the Searcher-out of the Abysses of Knowledge, Ssaskya - Pandita, and the Torch of the Faith of animate Beings, the King of the Doctrine, Phagspa-Lama ; and following their example, the believing Princes of the Mongols invited the Lamas of the Ssaskya and gave felicity to animate beings by the loyal management of the two administrations. Later from the time of Toghan-Timur-Oukha-Ghatou-Ssetsen-Khagan up to now there have been religious and political vicissitudes. Sins and crimes increased ;

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we shed blood ; we enjoyed the flesh of beings that have life. But starting from this day, on which by the reversibility of the wheel of the times we see in the splendour of the sun Sakya-Mouni in the person of the Bogdo-Lama, and the Lord of the earth Hormouzda in the person of the powerful Khan : starting from this great and fertile day, the immense stream of blood which raved in terrible waves is changed into an ocean of milk, deep and calm. Confiding in the Khan and the Dalaï-Lama, let us follow afresh the luminous way traced by our ancestors : it is the way of happiness."

The Dalaï-Lama was thus created in 1576.

The event had a stupendous influence upon the march of Oriental history. Altan-Khan took advantage of his new dignity as Lord of the Gifts of Religion, first to have the canon and secular law codified, and then to prepare the great blow against the Ming Dynasty. The renown of the Dalaï-Lama increased to such a degree, even among the Chinese, that the Emperor saw himself obliged in 1587, nine years only after the institution of the new Pope, to send embassies to Lhasa to recognize officially his supreme dignity, and thereby to gain a little of the goodwill of the clergy, which had been of such great advantage to the rival who had outstripped him. But it was bound to appear to the great dignitaries of the Church that the successors of the latter would one day reign over China. When in 1588 the Dalaï-Lama re-entered Nirvana he was immediately re-incarnated in the body of a newly-born Prince belonging to the family of Altan-Khan.

This young Prince naturally received his ecclesiastical education at Lhasa ; and the higher Thibetan clergy knew very well how to make of him the head of the Church, who forgets his origin and his family ties in

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the interests of his dignity. Meanwhile, Altan-Khan died, and the rivalry of his successors degenerated into military enterprises which entailed the complete disorganization of the Empire. The higher clergy, whose interest was always to remain on the side of the stronger, resolved then to support these clumsy princes no longer, and when the Khans of Ourga invited their brother, the young Dalai-Lama to reside near them (in the hope of being able to utilize his authority for their little personal affairs) the latter refused categorically to leave Thibet. But in order not to rouse the wrath of people who could by their military proceedings put Thibet to fire and sword, he gilded the pill for them in a very ingenious manner. Thanks to his all-knowledge he discovered in the person of a young Thibetan monk the re-incarnation of the Buddha-Maitreya (who plays somewhat the part of the Messiah in Buddhist mythology) and sent this man-god, who in spiritual rank is nearly his equal, as Vicar-General or Vice-Pope to Ourga. He was called among the Mongols Maïdari-Khoutouktou; he re-incarnated himself continuously at Ourga, where he lived in supreme authority over the Mongol Church; later on he was generally called Bogdo-Guiguen-Khoutouktou, and as such he still exercises an enormous power over the mental condition of the Mongols. (Among the numerous high dignitaries who are still at the present time dependent on the Guiguen, we must mention before all the Bandido-Khamba, the spiritual head of the great tribe of the Russian Buriats.) The Institution of the Maïdari-Khoutouktou took place in 1604.

Little confident from this time onwards in the star of the Mongol Princes the Pope of Lhasa directed all the strength of the clergy upon China, which had long

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been Buddhist, but where it was important, in order to remain arbiter of the situation, in every case to inculcate into the popular mind Papist conceptions sufficiently strong to counterbalance any secular influence. The feebleness of the Ming Dynasty, which, indeed, had always neglected the Church, made this task an easy one for him. At last towards 1640 circumstances were such that the population felt itself in closer submission to the will of the Dalaï-Lama than to that of the Emperor. The Dalaï-Lama virtually disposed of the throne of Peking.

At this time there had appeared among the Tunguses to the East of the Tchin-Gan mountains a conqueror who repeated on a small scale the grandiose career of Tchengis-Khan. This was Taïtsong-Khungtaïdji. His impetus was irresistible. The Dalaï-Lama put him under obligation on two occasions. Using the magic of his spiritual authority he brought the Mongol princes to submit peacefully to him ; then, some years later, he denounced to him at the right moment a great revolt of these same princes (who had just attacked the Dalaï-Lama out of revenge).

Taïtsong undertook to overthrow the Ming Dynasty, which was easy. But the consolidation of his own dynasty on the throne of Peking was a more arduous task. He understood that without the support of the authority of the man-god at Lhasa any peaceful government in China would be impossible. He then seized the opportunity of in his turn laying under an obligation the man who disposed of the souls of a hundred millions of believers ; he quelled the Mongol revolt and resigned himself to the clerical influence.

From that time his dynastic dream was realizable. The overthrow of the Ming Dynasty was only a question

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of time. But the time was bound logically to be employed, on the one side by the Dalaï-Lama in securing to himself the spiritual direction of the presumptive Emperor, on the other side by the Khan in assuring himself of the peaceful aid of the clergy, and, if possible, of the political suzerainty of Thibet, such as Khubla-Khan, the great Mongol Emperor, had enjoyed.

The Dalaï-Lama took the initiative in this diplomatic game. He sent to Mukden, the residence of the Khan, the best of his diplomatists, Gouyouçri-Tsordji, on whom he had conferred the honorific title of Ilaghouksan-Khoutouktou. The latter arrived at Mukden in 1642, and remitted to the Khan the message from the Dalaï-Lama b'Lo-b'Dsang :—

“ If we contemplate the multitude of other creatures subject to the revolution of births in the three worlds, we note that the happiness of obtaining the noble human body is still rarer than the appearance of a star in broad daylight. Among these rare appearances however, that of a monarch who rules the universe is as rare as the discovery of the philosopher's stone, which fulfils all desires. Now that thou art become the great and powerful monarch whose destiny is to be to remedy the misfortunes of this troubled time, thou wilt only render thyself worthy of that name if thou governest the totality of the peoples who obey thee according to the precepts of religion. Then, be the protector of the religion of the Transfigured, and assume the duties of Lord and Protector of the Gifts of Religion.”

The message bore the seals of the Pantchan and the Dalaï. There were some months of secret negotiations between Tsordji and Tai-tsong. At last the Khan sent the following reply :—

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“ I am not far at present from occupying the capital Tai-tou of the Ta-Ming ; as soon as I have finished my secular task, I shall invite the two divine Lamas ; at their feet I shall adore ; and I shall maintain the religion of Buddha.”

From that moment the respective situation of the Manchu Dynasty of the Ta-Tsings which still reigns, and of the Dalaï-Lama was fixed.

Tai-tsong himself, it is true, had no opportunity of keeping his promise. He died in 1643. And his son being a minor, it seemed for a moment that everything was again in question. But a fresh revolution in the palace at Peking gave the great Manchu generals a pretext for intervention. In 1644 they occupied the imperial town almost without resistance, and installed on the throne Tai-tsong's son, Eyebere Sassaktchi.

The Manchu Dynasty was soon ashamed of depending on the two man-gods of Thibet. But it was necessary to be on good terms with them, or say good-bye to the pacific government of China. In 1651 the Pantchan-Lama and the Dalaï-Lama were invited to Peking. The Manchu-Chinese historiographers are sober in details on this event so pregnant with consequences : the Mongol and Thibetan chronicles are singularly more explicit. And with good reason.

A kind of concordat was established at this time which stipulated on the one side the spiritual supremacy of the Dalaï-Lama over all Buddhists, including the Emperor in so far as he is Buddhist, the internal independence of Thibet, of which the Dalaï-Lama was to remain the political king, and the clerical monopoly of trade in Thibet. This monopoly, demanded to protect the interests of the clergy against the dangerous commercial faculties of the Chinese, implies the prohibition

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of Thibet to foreigners ; it is this legal prohibition, which is deferred to solely in the interests of the clergy, and not a barbarous characteristic imputed to the Thibetans, which prevents European travellers from reaching Lhasa. On the other side the concordat stipulated the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Thibet on behalf of the Emperor. It was, in fact, a complete victory of the Lamas over the Emperor. As a formal token of his vague vassalship the Dalaï-Lama was quite willing to pledge himself to send gifts to the Emperor every five years ; once it was some ten white camels, on other occasions a mantle of lynx fur, some tigers in a cage, an icon encrusted with jewels, elephants, a relic, a copy of the Holy Scriptures in gilded letters, or any other tribute, which could indemnify the Emperor only very illusorily, for whatever uncertainty there was in the clerical favour, the sole guarantee however of the fate of the dynasty.

In proportion as the Manchu rule infiltrated into the southern provinces of the Empire, it lost its popularity ; it was regarded as a foreign rule. There, the influence of the Buddhist clergy was weak, and there was not even, as in the northern and western provinces, the tie of a common religion between the dynasty and its subjects.

The Emperor Khang-hsi, who ascended the throne in 1662, exhausted the resources of his remarkable administrative talent for sixty years in remedying the blemishes which stained the social basis of the dynasty. He did not succeed in this, whatever the official panegyrics may say.

The extraordinary clerical impudence gave him no real loophole except at the time when about 1712 internal rivalries broke out in Thibet. In the midst of his

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numerous and difficult enterprises he ventured to send a vigorous military expedition to Thibet. The effects of this enterprise were only temporary. For a moment it was possible to believe that the Imperial power was absolute at Lhasa, and that the dynasty would keep the influence so ardently longed for over the nomination of the Dalai or the Pantchan. But the episcopal rivalries once extinguished, the Church was stronger than ever.

When in 1720 Lhasa and Peking proceeded to a new arrangement of official relations, no fundamental change was made. The commercial monopoly of the clergy, the hardest condition for China, still remained. The spiritual authority of the Lamas remained necessarily intact. Afterwards, as before, the dynasty had to reckon with the influence of the clergy over its Buddhist subjects. Lastly, as for the suzerainty, which Chinese history would be very glad to characterize as sovereignty from this time onwards, it also had remained very nearly what it had been. There was one difference ; there was henceforth at Lhasa and three other localities a Chinese garrison ; these troops, of feeble efficiency, were commanded by a Manchu officer and a Chinese officer, who were to reside at Lhasa, and had as their superior officer the Governor-General of Sze-tchouen ; it was, furthermore, expressly stipulated that these officers were not authorized to intervene in any case in the internal affairs of Thibet.

Now the concordat of 1720 is as a matter of right still in force to-day.

The diplomatic vicissitudes which official relations between Peking and Lhasa have undergone since 1720 have no very great interest from the point of view of universal history. The three material facts, which

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determine the situation of the Ta-Tsing in reference to the Dalai-Lama are the following :—

The Manchu Dynasty does not enjoy any popularity except in the northern provinces, Tchi-li, Chan-si, Chen-si, Khan-sou, and certain districts of Ho-nan and Sse-tchouen, that is to say, in places where Lamaism reigns supreme over the mind of the people ; in the rest of the immense Empire the dynasty has always been regarded as foreign ; the great secret societies, which are all impressed with a clearly nationalist character, and the innumerable attempts at revolution, from the Miao-tse (about 1740) to the Boxers, which all had as their first aim the overthrow of the Manchu throne, say as much in quite clear terms. The dynasty then necessarily needs the clerical help to ensure fidelity in the only provinces where its authority possesses any other foundation than mere brute force. But while needing the clergy the dynasty (and here is its defect) has no means of imposing its views as to the management of clerical affairs.

The Manchu Dynasty indeed has no influence upon the nomination of the Dalai-Lama and the Pantchan-Lama. It has been shown that these two Lords of the Church are immortal in the sense that on the death of their bodies their souls are re-incarnated immediately in a new-born child ; it is thus of the highest importance to discover which newly born infant happens to be the new Grand-Lama. Now this election, over which the Court of Peking claims in its annals to have the determining voice, is made in the following fashion. On the entry into Nirvana of one of the two Lamas the civil register (kept by the clergy) makes out the list of boys born in the district of Lhasa in the interval of time

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which elapses between the death of the Lama and the next sunrise. Those of these children are sought for at whose birth extraordinary atmospheric conditions were observed. A first selection from among them is made by exhibiting to them the devotional utensils of the defunct mixed with other and identical ones. Those of these infants who clutch at the real utensils share in the further selection. Their names are written on a list which contains only the names of the newly-born without any indications of their family or parents. The surviving Grand Lama, to whom this list is presented in the solemn assembly of the great dignitaries, marks three of the names with a stroke of the pen, his eyes being closed. The conclave composed of the heads of the great monasteries of Lhasa, and other great dignitaries having the rank of Khoutouktou, who happen to be at Lhasa, is immediately formed. The De-çri, Great Chancellor of the Dalai-Lama and the real director of the policy of Lhasa, proceeds to make three equal strips of paper bearing the names designated. He puts them before the eyes of the assembly into the celebrated golden urn, a present, it is said, from Khubla-Khan. The cover being replaced upon the sacred vessel, the Grand Lama makes his entrance. With his left hand he raises the cover, with his right he draws out one of the strips of paper, and pronounces the name in a loud voice. The assembly prostrates itself and murmurs for the first time in honour of the young man-god the holy syllables: Om-ma-ni-pad-me-houm. From that moment the designated child is the property of the superior clergy; he lives for the first years with his mother in the grandiose palace of Bras-bong at Potala near Lhasa, served, educated, instructed by eminent priests; his education, if it is

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permitted to compare it with that of other re-incarnations more easy of observation, must be of the first order. But before even reaching the age of adolescence this extraordinary being has become not the incarnation of the Buddha, but that of the collective spirit which rules the monastic oligarchy of Lhasa. The Manchu Emperor has no voice in the matter ; the interests of the clerical powers, the same from Lhasa to Rome, and from St. Petersburg to Benares, are the sole guide of the action of the Grand Lama. And the Grand Lama is in theory the spiritual director of the successors of Taï-tsong. The Tchangcha Khoutouktou, vicar of the Grand Lama at Pekin, a personage who has never been noticed by the Western diplomats, is, from the Buddhist point of view, the Emperor's confessor. We know that auricular confession is an old invention of the Buddhists. It would be very bold to assert that the Emperor permits him to fulfil this extraordinary function in fact, but that matters little : the Buddhist world, above all the clergy, is convinced that he does fulfil it. This fact shows the degree of dependence in which the dynasty stands in relation to the Church. But this dependence became so much the more embarrassing as the Manchu Dynasty was always the guarantor of the integrity of Thibetan territory without having, for that matter, the smallest influence over its internal administration. And it was evident that the Manchu Dynasty could no longer conform to this condition, so soon as Thibet came into contact with powers encroaching upon her, whether from the South or the West. In this case the situation of the dynasty was bound to assume an aspect of extreme gravity.

But before this case was presented Lhasa saw

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advancing from the North (like all the conquerors of China) a new and powerful leader of a people—the Czar.

The Empire of the Czars entered into communication with the Buddhist world from the time when its frontiers touched those of the Empire of the Manchus. That took place first in Transbaikalia, when the celebrated market of Kiakhta was founded astride the frontier right in the Buriat country. The Buriats are probably the tribe which gave birth to Tchengis-Khan. It was, and still is, a people of pure Mongol civilization, and naturally Buddhist.

Having felt at the first contact the extraordinary greatness of China in general and the formidable power of Buddhism in particular, Russia treated the Manchu Dynasty as an equal, held Chinese civilization to be equivalent with that of Europe, respected the nationalities and the faith of the peoples living upon the territory politically Russian, in short, imitated in small what the Chinese dynasties had been obliged to do on a large scale.

In this way it was inevitable that excellent relations should be established with the Buddhist clergy. Russia, in introducing into the countries in question the Cossack social order, which is an essentially military organization, a heritage of the Mongol tribes who had ruled in Russia, did not materially change the habits of these peoples. The Government adopted the ingenious idea of supporting Buddhism officially among its new subjects, and this idea at the end of the story repaid her in her supremacy in Asia. The organization of the Church was officially recognized; and the head of the Buriat Church the Bandido-Khamba, whose direct superior is the Maïdari-Khoutouktou of Ourga,

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who is only the vicar of the Dalaï-Lama, received a double investiture—first, spiritual, from Lhasa ; then, political, from St. Petersburg. Thus nearly a century ago direct relations were opened between the Czar and the Grand Lamas. The Buriat Khamba-Lama, a Russian subject, a functionary of Lhasa, resides at the expense of the Czar in the magnificent palace of the Lake of Geese, nearly half-way between Baïkal and Kiakhtha ; he is the real ecclesiastical authority of the country. The majority of the native Cossack soldiers being Buddhists, it is the Lamas who administer to them the oath of fidelity, the Lamas whom the soldiers consult, the Lamas who bless the flags of the Czar ; and these flags, in time of peace, are actually kept in the palace of the Khamba-Lama ; Buddhist physicians are allowed to practise freely, not only because they are in general superior to the hybrid productions of the Russian Universities, but also because they are of service in retaining the friendship of the clergy, and, in consequence, the still more important friendship of Lhasa.

XIV

Common Interests of the Czar and the Dalai-Lama in relation to China

THESE mutually benevolent relations between the Czar, who subtracted something from his authority as Pope of the Orthodox, and the Dalai-Lama, who made a similar sacrifice of part of his power as theocratic king, could not but bear magnificent fruits. Each of the two personages naturally pursued his own projects with the hope of seeing them realized by the more or less unconscious aid of the other. These successes were to be lost or won in China. The Dalai-Lama certainly still had an incalculable effective influence in China, but, as has been said, he could profit by it but little because the action which emanated from Lhasa seemed to the Chinese to emanate simply from a mysterious popular current. And, speaking generally, effective action alone is not sufficient for great ecclesiastical organizations; it is not their strength, it is their splendour, their recognized force, which marks their greatness. The Buddhist clergy, represented for two centuries by the Chinese scribes as being, if not a devoted, at least an obedient servant of the Manchu Dynasty, felt the universal acceptance of this false interpretation as a perpetual

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affront, and its whole desire could only be to show once again to the Buddhist world, that it was not the Emperor but the Pope who was the holder of supreme authority. This desire was, however, somewhat difficult to realize: it involved the defeat of the Manchu Dynasty. Such a defeat in itself was not perhaps in itself very difficult to inflict upon a dynasty which had been meeting with nothing but checks for fifty years. It was not, however, the triumph of the Western Christians which was to be brought about, but the triumph of Buddhism, and as Buddhists or friends of Buddhists capable of supporting the Dalai-Lama against the Ta-Tsing, there were only the Russians.

These latter found themselves in nearly the self-same situation. In view of the distant political and economic aim, which was completely unrealizable in the near future owing to the antagonism of the West and the want of means of organization and exploitation, it was necessary to establish a state of affairs which would guarantee to Russia her liberty of action in a more distant future. This state of things implied the necessity of exercising an irresistible ascendancy over the Manchu Dynasty, which would make it possible to cause the dynasty to accomplish against rivals, who were the objects of apprehension, actions which Russia herself could not undertake, and to utilize the popular xenophobia in China against the Westerns, and to the profit of Russia.

We perceive from this time the community of interests which might unite the Czar and the Dalai-Lama. The humiliation of the Ta-Tsing would bring them to the exercise of a preponderance, and both must have caught a vague glimpse of the possibility of utilizing the xenophobia in order to reach their ends.

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The Buddhist clergy could stimulate it, make the dynasty once more responsible for the European scourge, and place it in a very awkward posture before its own people and the stranger ; and Russia could at the fitting moment save the dynasty and turn the xenophobia upon her rivals.

It is scarcely probable that so complicated a plan could have been seriously contemplated without other motive forces. But it was gradually formed as events happened.

In any case its execution became suddenly realizable towards 1892. Official relations between Peking and Lhasa were in fact broken in 1892.

This had been the consequence of a serious blunder on the part of the English Government. Already a long time before this, when the British Government in India had annexed the undoubtedly Thibetan district of Lha-dak, the Dalai-Lama had called upon the Emperor to intervene. The Court of Peking, which had just been put in check by the Western Powers, was quite incapable of doing so. The district in question being very far away from Lhasa, the Dalai-Lama resigned himself to the loss. But on the one side the Manchu-Thibetan harmony had received the first shock ; and on the other hand England had made a mortal enemy of the Dalai-Lama, whose strength she did not suspect.

From this time onwards the Oligarchy of Lhasa caused its secret activity to be revived. The De-çri, in his quality as General *de propaganda fide*, remembering the time which had preceded the accession of the Manchus, undertook a vast campaign for the re-establishment of the authority of Lhasa in the whole Buddhist world. From Manchuria (already exclusively

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peopled by Chinese, the Manchus having been assimilated) to Burmah, from the Punjab to Baïkal, the force of the pan-Buddhist idea, incarnated in the person of the holy Dalaï-Lama, made itself felt ; in Mongolia, in China, in Turkestan, in Siam, popular songs were sung, which were sometimes of a character clearly subversive of the existing political organizations. Hardly had this preparatory propaganda raised hopes at Lhasa for the final victory of the Church, when England, by a clumsy blow which bears the stigma of the most disastrous want of tact, hastened the march of events and involuntarily made her enemy, the Dalaï-Lama, arbiter in the differences which the longing for universal dominion has brought into being between England and Russia.

The Indian Government in 1890 annexed Sikkim, the district which contains the holy mountain of Kinchinjunga, and stretches far to the north of the chain of the Himalayas, the Thibetan frontier. This fresh incursion upon his territory at a relatively short distance from Lhasa completed the indignation of the Dalaï-Lama, and the constellation of forces which govern Asia was profoundly affected as the result.

The Dalaï-Lama summoned the Manchu Emperor to conform strictly to the concordat, and to maintain the territorial integrity of his dominions ; he threatened in case of refusal to consider the ancient treaty as non-existent, no longer to send presents, to refuse to accept the presence of Chinese troops at Lhasa, and to resume his entire liberty of action alike political and spiritual. The Emperor, in view of the impossibility of meeting the demand, did not even venture to reply.

The presents which the Dalaï-Lama should have sent in 1892 were not despatched. The concordat of

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1720 had ceased to exist, and the Tchangtcha-Khoutouktou at Peking, while remaining at the Court as a simple and dangerous observer, no longer took any part in the official actions of the Government.

This was the time when the friendly relations which reigned between the Bandido-Khamba, the supreme Lama of the Buriats, and the Government of the Czar bore their fruits. Lhasa having virtually freed itself from the Manchu suzerainty, had now to fear both Chinese brutality and English roughness. In spite of the state of dependence in which the Manchu Dynasty stood in reference to Lhasa the Chinese danger was not to be despised because the Dalaï-Lama required more time to undermine authority and overturn the throne than the Government required to send a military expedition to Thibet. On another side it was well known at Lhasa that England desired nothing so much as to bring Sze-tchouen into direct connexion with Assam by the Batang route, which would be at the same time the ruin of Thibet, the death agony of Lamaism in China, and English supremacy in the Far East. Lhasa then needed a protector.

But if the Manchu Dynasty showed its capacity to exist without, and even contrary to, the authority of Lhasa, Russia had to abandon every hope of taking at an early date that ascendancy over the dynasty which was necessary to her, in order to assure to herself a preponderating influence in the tributary countries of the north, such as Manchuria and Mongolia, and, above all, to get her European rivals ousted from Northern China without engaging her own responsibility; and on another side if England pursued her aims by treating the Dalaï-Lama as a simple vassal of China, English prestige gained in a manner to counter-

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balance at one blow the laborious results of Russian diplomacy in Persia, Afghanistan, and China. Russia then needed a powerful Dalaï-Lama.

The common danger, though different in its nature, was to bring the Dalaï-Lama and the Czar together, and the conspiracy of these two Pope-Kings, who between them dispose perhaps of one third of humanity, could not but engender a movement of monstrous scope. The natural channel of communication, one sheltered from any indiscretion, evidently passed by the Lake of Geese; the Khamba-Lama was the intermediary appointed by circumstances. These relations, established in darkness, soon had as their consequence official steps no less secret. Russia, who saw a great Chinese crisis approaching, and even contributed to it, took the first step. A pretended student, a Russian subject, of Buriat nationality, a distinguished pupil of the Lama Academy on the Lake of Geese, was sent to Lhassa, not, as the Russian authorities told the tale, to finish his studies at the very fount of wisdom, but as the bearer of an Imperial message, whose contents, for that matter, have never been divulged. When after the absence of a year, just long enough to accomplish his mission, the young Lama returned, the Khamba-Lama Tchoigyin Iroltieff himself started immediately for St. Petersburg.

It was not till four years later that the secret of the relations thus inaugurated between Lhassa and St. Petersburg could be pierced.

XV

The Constellation of the Powers in the Far East before 1900

UNLESS impossible chances should deliver to publicity the secret archives and correspondence of the Russian Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance, we shall doubtless never know the details of the preliminary steps and immediate consequences which have certainly occasioned the various actions of official personages, and the subsequent exchange of diplomatic documents by the way of the Lake of Geese. The further development of events allows us, as we shall see, to assume with an almost absolute certainty that at this time the community of interest between the two Pope-Kings had already made it possible to anticipate community of action, at least in one department of affairs.

It is evident that Lhasa never imparted to St. Petersburg its private anxieties in reference to the English invasion; and it is no less clear that the Russian Government never exposed to the Thibetan Government its distress of mind at seeing the Manchu Dynasty either too powerful for Russia to impose her embarrassing friendship upon it, or too much in submission to Western influence to be utilized as a buffer

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against the ambitions of the maritime Powers. But the simple reality of the friendly Russo-Thibetan relations sufficed at this time to guarantee the aims pursued by both theocracies alike. The positions were taken up.

All that was further wanted was to wait for an event which might place the one in a posture constraining it to show its intentions, so that the other, while supporting it with moral authority if not with its effective force, should make its profit in any state of the game at the expense either of the Manchu Dynasty or of the Westerns. Chance, the best servant of bold politicians, immediately took upon itself to produce events which were bound to be profitable to both at once in their action against the Manchu Dynasty and also against the maritime Powers: such was the Sino-Japanese war.

This curious incident has never had, from the general point of view, the importance of a war between two great States of the Far East, but solely that of an episode, a considerable one it is true, in the diplomatic war, which England is compelled to conduct against Russia, since the latter has been seeking in the East the free seas which the West has closed to her.

At the beginning of this interlude, which had in itself no importance for the development of the Chinese question in general, the constellation of the forces which dominated the eastern portion of the continent of Asia was as follows:—

The Manchu Dynasty, incessantly harassed by the West, had entrusted the care of its safety to the unparalleled shrewdness of Li-hung-chang. It thought only of working for its own preservation; its interests coincided, however, with those of the Chinese, in the

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sense that the friendship of Russia, although embarrassing, was the only stable guarantee for the existence of the dynasty and the relative liberty of the Chinese people. Li, a Chinese in the service of the Manchus, never ceased to conduct the two interests together so long as that was possible. At that time the two powers, the people and the dynasty, were only passive forces. The dynasty was disturbed by the unfriendly silence of the Dalaï-Lama ; disturbed also by the Russian friend, who already held in his embrace its ancestral provinces, Manchuria, from Corea to Transbaïkalia ; yet further disturbed by the insolent West, whose growing appetite opened a glimpse of the time when it would be necessary to resist and refuse at any cost ; disturbed further by the pretensions of the little Japanese friends, or rather apes, of the English, who with the help of the money of their teachers in barbaric lore had not only taken upon them to introduce into their own country all the coarseness and turpitude of the West in order to be able to abandon their national culture, of which they were decidedly not worthy, but further to imitate the horrors and stupidities of the military imperialism which characterizes the decadence of our intellect and sentiment. The Manchu Dynasty reigning over the people, which gave everything to Japan from the foundation of her social organization to the general ideas which rule her psychology, from her poetry to her writing, and all the arts and trades—the Manchu Dynasty was suddenly to see, to its enormous surprise, that this degenerate offshoot from its people, supported by the artifices of the Westerns, was acquiring an accidental importance which had no correspondence with its intrinsic value.

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The Manchu Dynasty, in the system of forces in mutual collision in the Far East, was no longer anything but the general meeting-point.

The Chinese people, exposed by the feebleness of the Manchu Dynasty to all the arbitrariness and all the meannesses of the so-called colonizing methods of Europe, was a prey to xenophobia in its most exaggerated form. This xenophobia, or rather dread of the West, did not, however, prevent it from preserving a relatively appreciable calm. In the interior the Western scourge was still endured with a pliant fatalism, which included the Manchu Dynasty itself in the number of those who are powerless to resist the invasion of the Westerns. There was a people afflicted with xenophobia, but resigned, and to some small extent faithful, to the dynasty.

The Westerns, along with their Japanese imitator, did not picture themselves, as we should be tempted to believe, in the guise of adversaries of the Manchu Dynasty, nor even of the Chinese people. The latter appeared to them merely as an immense instrument of work to be acquired at the lowest price. They reckoned neither with the people nor with the dynasty, but solely with their respective rivals; and the dynasty only interested them in so far as they could only hope to beat their rivals by creating an impression upon it—the powerless—by the artifices of their foolish diplomacy.

Russia, in consequence of her excellent policy, found herself already holding a good hand. Indispensable to the Manchu Dynasty, and also to the Dalai-Lama, she was sure of the support of the latter as of the docility of the former in any possible conflagration with the West. Unknown to the mass of the Chinese

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people, but friendly greeted in the countries where contact had taken place between Russians and Chinese, she had on her side against the West the Buddhists of the North ; and, a point of supreme importance, the xenophobia only hit the few Russians in the ports who could be identified with the Westerns ; over and above this Russia could legitimately wait at least until the pan-Buddhist movement, if it were one day directed against the Manchu Dynasty, offered her an occasion both for saving the dynasty (and then of dominating it), and for seeing whether the same movement could be identified with an outburst of xenophobia, her rivals being put in an awkward position without any effort on her side.

Thibet occupied anew, for the first time since two centuries, the place which the oligarchy of Lhasa thought the proper object of their desires. She could, by the invisible threads of her intrigues, influence, rouse, set in motion the Buddhists, and also the countless pseudo-Buddhists, mystics, esotero-maniacs, in short, the whole immense herd of those who are subject to religious hysteria in China. She could thereby shake the throne of the Manchus, she could equally well provoke a display of this mystic force in another direction, for example, against the hated English. She disposed in any case—having in consequence of the Russian friendship no disagreeable political results to fear—of all the souls accessible to the artifices of priests, and to the ideas mysteriously put into circulation. She disposed of what is called in China the “mind of peoples,” and especially in Northern China, in Manchuria and Mongolia.

Here, then, were four forces at work : Russia, Thibet, China and the West ; all four revolving round

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a fifth element, the Manchu Dynasty, which forms the sole point at which all the four can show themselves and meet at the same time.

The constellation and valuation of the five elements once established, their final conflagration—such as began in 1894 by the Sino-Japanese war doubtless not to finish till a far distant future—takes a totally different aspect from that under which interested observers have presented it to the public in their respective countries.

The events themselves being known to satiety, only the broad lines, the secret springs, the secret actions, the secret aims, which have come to light during those transactions are of general interest. In this way the true aspect of the question at its present stage will spring into shape spontaneously. We shall not see a history of contemporary events, but their histology.

XVI

Russian diplomatic Action in China since the Sino-Japanese War. The Cassini Convention. The Russo-Chinese Bank and its Aims. The Gold Concession in Mongolia

THE curious story of the ultimatum of Matsou-chima by which, in 1894, Russia astutely prevented Japan from gaining a footing on the continent of Asia, and by which she gained the entire confidence of the Manchu Emperor, was in reality the point of departure of the general engagement of the five elements. It suddenly showed England and her tool, Japan, the fatal danger which threatened the dream of supremacy in Asia, upon which these two Powers have believed themselves able to construct the fancied edifice of their future greatness. But as nobody had thought of this danger, as in consequence nobody was prepared to face the new and terrible adversary, who appeared standing behind China facing the maritime powers in their greed of exploitation, it proved essentially necessary to submit to the wishes of this new interested party, however unfriendly they were to Western procedure.

For the first time a fundamental difference between Russia and the West was displayed on this occasion.

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The whole of Europe, seduced by the prospect of a lucrative exploitation of China by the imposed application of modern methods, applauded its errand-boy, Japan, who did the heavy work for her benevolent protectors. And there was Russia about to destroy all these fine expectations by a return to the barbarous, Chinese, Asiatic point of view, which seemed incapable of explanation !

From the absurd ending of this absurd war clear sight should, however, have been possible. The treaty of Simonosaki simply ratified the words of consolation which the Russian minister at Peking, Count Cassini, had carried to the Manchu Dynasty. The rapid conclusion of the peace imposed by Russia had two reasons : on the one hand, it put Japan back in her place and showed at the same time the insuperable necessity which constrains Russia to intervene in each incident in the Far East ; on the other hand, it prevented the Chinese people from taking cognizance of this war, and in this way gave an opportunity to the dynasty for declaring itself, if not victorious, at least as having been able to bring to a successful termination distant enterprises not within the knowledge of the public.

The example of undisputed military feebleness, however, of which the Manchu Dynasty have given proof, could not fail to reawaken in a still more violent form the different concupiscences of the maritime Powers. This was the time when the too famous theory of the partition of China came to birth in the ill-balanced brains of European imperialists. And doubtless an attempt would have been made to put this theory in practice if the rivalry between the Powers had not brought them face to face with the possibility of a conflagration of Europe.

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The theory of spheres of influence—the diplomatic form of the theory of partition—could be put in the foreground in the relations with the Manchu Dynasty with less danger to Europe. And this theory, which by its definition maintained both the integrity of China and the Manchu Dynasty, could be skilfully adopted by Russia to give her the appearance of being a simple element constituting part of the concert of Europe. The application of the theory was followed by different concessions of territory on lease, in which the Manchu Dynasty paid a ransom to Europe for an over-embarassing protection. These concessions were, however, the source of the most formidable difficulties on both sides.

The Manchu Dynasty disposed on this one occasion of territory whose administration it had formerly usurped, and of which, in Chinese eyes, it had no power to dispose ; it ran the risk of losing the little sympathy which it had among the people. And at the same time it by no means got rid of the European diplomatists : the fact of the concessions in itself, along with the inevitable and annoying collisions between Europeans and Chinese on their borders, brought on an interminable series of grievances, protests, threats and demands, which without exception were quite naturally settled in favour of the strangers.

On another side the Europeans had taken the decisive step in the absolutely false path on to which they had been drawn by the following twofold mistake : that the Chinese are uncivilized, and therefore colonizable people, and that the Manchu Dynasty disposes with sovereign authority of the resources and produce of the country. In this way they organized their exploiting activities according to a method which

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could not but increase the resistance of the people ; inflame the xenophobia ; create a phenomenon unknown for centuries—a Chinese sense of nationality ; exasperate the popular mind ; and lastly, by rebound, shake the authority of the dynasty, which, however, offered the invaders from the West their only hold upon the nation.

Russia, of course, still took—although implicated herself in the policy of the spheres of influence—a totally different place from that of the maritime Powers. The establishment of the ports of Dalny and Port Arthur was, above all, from the Chinese point of view, a strategic act which had, so to say, no influence upon popular and economic life in China. And while the blind West abandoned itself to the conviction that the Russo-Chinese friendship at the time of the Sino-Japanese war had only been a chance of the moment skilfully turned by Russia to the spoliation of her protected friend, who doubtless was already bitterly repenting of his confidence, work was going on between St. Petersburg and Peking in a manner as friendly as it was profitable.

Count Cassini, whose principal task—that of showing the Manchu Dynasty that a strong Russia was its only hope of safety—was accomplished, left Peking, and traversed in a long triumph the immense road which up to then alone united the Russian and Chinese dominions. He crossed Mongolia, remained some days at Ourga, the seat of the Mongol Great Khan, and of the Guiguen-Khoutouktou, Vicar of the Dalai-Lama, and returned to St. Petersburg through Siberia. Prince Oukhtomsky, unofficial envoy to China with a special mission, repeated this triumphant journey the following year. These little external incidents, which hide dip-

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lomatic events whose details will never be known, did not seem to signify much in comparison with another event, which could not be hidden, at least not so far as a great part of it was concerned : this was the self-styled mysterious Cassini convention signed by Li-hung-chang at Moscow, a kind of Chinese present for the Czar's coronation. This was the convention which stipulated for the foundation of the Russo-Chinese bank, and the construction of the Trans-Manchurian railway. While the construction of this strategic line could only have a temporary importance for Russia, the foundation of the bank possessed quite another significance. The Trans-Manchurian, in the mind of the Manchu Government, was in reality to be of utility to the dynasty at Peking possessing a different degree of importance to itself and to Russia ; by having at her disposal the means of transport, relatively powerful, Russia would be able to oppose successfully eventual attempts at fresh invasions of the Asiatic continent on the part either of Japan or the West ; and on the other side, the prosperity of the three Manchurian provinces could not but be increased, in so much as the construction of the railways to be executed by Russia involved the preliminary annihilation of the Khon Khous, who had established in this country a veritable State inside the State, which will be discussed later. The Chinese Government was further very willing to pay part of the expenses of construction with money borrowed in Europe.

Did it enter into the calculations at Peking that the establishment of the railway was equivalent to a Russian annexation ? It is doubtful. In any case, the friendship of Russia was wanted, and, on another side, it could always be hoped that the rivalry of the

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Westerns and the Japanese would prevent so audacious a stroke. Better still, it appears from conversations with the son of Li-hung-chang, that this remarkable man thought by leaving the initiative and responsibility for the great works in Manchuria to the Russians, to bring Russia and Japan directly into collision ; the two powers, he foresaw, by mutually weakening one another, would raise the prestige of the dynasty indispensable to both in coming to a settlement with its adversary.

Russia, on the other side, saw in the construction of the Trans-Manchurian a strategic act, which could not as yet be suspected at Peking, but which would involve the seizure of the destinies of the Ta-Tsing Dynasty.

The Russo-Chinese bank was supposed to furnish the funds necessary for the construction of the Trans-Manchurian ; according to its statutes it was also to favour Russo-Chinese commerce at the same time and by all means in its power.

These means, as we shall see later, have been extremely curious on occasions. It was further—but its statutes are silent on this point—to act as a clandestine branch of the Ministry of Finance, and therefore of the Russian imperial policy. Its foundation was a very bold effort to engage Jewish, cosmopolitan, governmental, and imperial capital in enterprises which, while bearing the appearance of being private, were not the less the immediate expression of Russian activity. The manifold interests of all the members of that occult Government, which directs Russian policy over the head of the Czar, were mingled in this enormous affair, which, under the cover of a simple official appeal to private capital, had a no less ambitious tendency than that of gaining a decisive ascendancy over everything that touches the Far East, and, by its rebound,

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upon the disposition of all the financial markets of the West.

The beautiful and ingenious wife of the Minister of Finance gave, in the place of her husband—who is constitutionally prevented from taking part in this gigantic affair—both her name and her capital and her favours. Prince Oukhtomsky, the external confidential emissary, a skilful pressman, a personal friend of the Czar, and above all else with an excellent understanding of China, a transparent confidant of Li, a master of intrigue, and a charmer of the serpents of the obscure reaction, envious and consolidated, at St. Petersburg, supplied the brilliancy of his name, the simplicity of his soul, his astuteness as a journalist, and his splendid insolence as a man superior to all suspicions. MM. Rothstein and Spitzer seconded these leading parts with the inexhaustible resources of the higher Jewish finance of Paris, Berlin, London and New York. Lastly, Li-hung-chang and several Chinese syndicates worthily represented the legendary Chinese commercial spirit in this all-embracing combination.

Two extraordinary men were found to constitute the executive of this body, soon to be of a legislative character in Far Eastern matters. One of them, a pure Russian, whose diplomatic mind and financial shrewdness are only equalled among the great Chinese financiers, had the opportunity of showing his superiority at Peking. M. Pokolitoft organized the Peking establishment of the Russo-Chinese bank, that is to say the hidden economic agency of the Russian Government to the Ta-Tsing. The other organizer, M. von Grot, a veritable genius for administration and languages, boasting of a number of nationalities (Russian, American and Chinese) and of high

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Government employ and others no less manifold, figured in the Far East in every place where there was something to be done. A man of many transformations, he was at one time bank manager, at another railway concessionary, at another inspector, at another contractor for military constructions, at another mine-owner, resident-general, minister, governor, consul, or postmaster. He incarnated, in turns, a veritable stalking horse of the Witte Government, all the difficult and complicated functions which did not permit the application of the principle of division of labour.

Outside its official part as constructor of the Trans-Manchurian, and organizer, under a private authority, of Russo-Chinese trade, also outside its hidden part of clandestine agent of the subterraneous policy of Russia, the Bank had another task, in formal contradiction not only with its statutes, but further with the fundamental laws of China: it had the mission of seeking for and exploiting the auriferous deposits which, in all probability, were bound to exist in the northern tributary states of China.

The execution of this task, evidently extremely delicate, but no less effective, was only possible—and this is a point extremely important for the characteristics of Russo-Chinese relations at that time, 1896-97—by a formal abdication on the part of the Ta-Tsing from one of their most zealously defended prerogatives.

The concession to look for and exploit gold mines in Northern Mongolia which M. von Grot obtained in 1897 (naturally, in his personal quality, the Minister of Finance not being able to proceed to exploitations of this kind on foreign soil) is in truth a far more considerable event than the concession of the Trans-Manchurian; for it was the annihilation of tradition, and,

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what is almost still more serious, the reversal of the divine law of Thibetan Buddhism.

Chinese law, which forbids "under penalty of death the disturbance of the soil with a view to digging up treasures," goes back to the great Mongol Emperors of the thirteenth century.

Thibetan Buddhism, imposed on the Far East by these Mongolian Emperors, teaches indifference with respect to the conditions of life. The vows of poverty and chastity, which Christianity adopted, have been a rule accepted by the Buddhist clergy, and it made the people submit to it. Gold was stigmatized as an eternal source of evil, charity demanded that its approach should be forbidden. Only the Princes of the Church, reincarnations of Buddha, and as such superior to evil and the passions, could produce and handle the formidable metal.

On another side, the Government is closely assimilated to a large family, but a family which, having no peers, recognizes no control. Thus the individual is forced to altruism, but the egoism of the State is unlimited. Reasons of individual morality forbid the production of gold to private persons, but State reasons boldly confer the monopoly of gold upon the State. This monopoly has for five centuries been accepted by a third of humanity. It is in vigour to-day as in the time of the great Khubla-Khan, and we must recognize that it has powerfully contributed to the progress of credit, which will doubtless cause the disappearance of useless money.

XVII

*Political Importance of the Concession to exploit Gold.
The Mongol Princes. The Gold Standard in Russia*

WHAT were the reasons for which the Manchu Dynasty granted the gold concessions to Count Cassini, or to his successor, M. de Giers, or rather to MM. de Grot, d'Oukhtomsky and Pokolitoff ?

It is permitted to see in them the first rebound from the policy of Lhasa. It was on the part of the dynasty a fairly skilful reply to the Thibetan clergy, who had broken off official ties with the Court of Peking.

But there was something else. The dynasty, in granting mining concessions in Mongolia, was usurping a right, and it doubtless knew that its apparent graciousness to Russia could not but engender endless contests and difficulties between the Russian concessionaries and the Mongol Princes. It hoped, perhaps, in the case in which armed Russo-Mongol conflicts should really come to pass, to be able to prove that it had granted the concession not voluntarily, but under irresistible pressure, and thereby to gain time. This is even probable, for it carefully avoided extending its concessions over the Manchurian provinces, where its authority is direct, and where, in consequence, a mining concession would have been exploited without delay.

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The Manchu Dynasty is not in fact sovereign in Mongolia, it is only suzerain. The Mongol Princes have virtually in their own territories the same rights as the Manchu Emperor in Manchuria. The sole prerogative of the suzerain consists in collecting a certain impost, and in holding jurisdiction in the Chinese trading colonies which constitute veritable foreign towns in Mongolia. On the other hand, the Suzerain does not dispose directly either of the soil or of produce or of the military or civil organizations of the country. The mining concession, which the Emperor could have granted in his own country in Manchuria, had no meaning in Mongolia ; the Mongol Princes alone were free to grant or refuse it. This act or rather abuse of power, of which the dynasty rendered itself guilty, had, furthermore, at a later time consequences which deceived all the expectations of the Court of Peking ; it destroyed the secular loyalty of the Mongol Princes and drove them, guided by the clergy, into the arms of Russia.

The latter was perfectly well informed as to the constitutional situation in Mongolia. Russia ran the risk of raising the Mongol Princes against her with full knowledge : an event which, in the case of a conflagration, might have fatal results for Russian policy, the line of communication between Russia and the Pacific being liable to be interrupted very easily and very efficaciously in the valley of the Selenga. But Russia had powerful reasons for acting in spite of this fact. To begin with, she flattered the self-respect of the Manchu Dynasty by affecting to believe its power was absolute as far as the Russian frontier. The Russian construction of the Trans-Manchurian, which could have been interpreted as a humiliation in the surround-

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ings of the Court, received thereby a kind of counterpoise. And on another side it was absolutely necessary to intensify the Russian gold industry in Asia at any cost whatever.

Subtracting the profits to be immediately realized by the undertakers of the Russo-Chinese bank, the financial situation of the Empire peremptorily demanded steps in this direction, and rapid steps. The introduction into Russia of the gold standard in the very middle of a period of terrible economic decay, and the creation of the new monetary unit by taking as such simply the old unit fallen to a disastrous price—these audacious financial artifices, which were well enough suited to raise the economic reputation of the country abroad, but demanded at the same time fresh and enormous internal efforts to give them probability ; the fresh additional burdens of taxes, new monopolies, the incessant famines engendered by the new financial policy demanding the exportation of corn at any cost ; the complete disorganization of the autonomous administration of the country districts—in one word, the inextricable internal situation could neither be hidden nor accepted without damaging the immense weight of Russia in the concert of the Powers, unless it could be made to appear one of the great periods of transition which characterize the rapid development of economic power. So industries were created afresh, the need of which had not made itself felt in the least, railways were built whose construction was not justified by any traffic, enormous sums were borrowed to improve the military organization ; in one word, everything was prepared with an eye to influence abroad, and it was a matter of compulsion to neglect, even to destroy, what economic force remained in the people.

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The new monetary standard, however, which was so worthy of confidence on paper, led during this time an extremely precarious existence. What was wanted was gold, and, under penalty of a terrible cataclysm, the new standard had to be maintained at least in presence of the foreigner. It is difficult to know, at least with exactness, to what the figure of the gold necessary to render the new standard stable amounted. From an obliging source, but one whose authority is beyond doubt, it is ascertained that the quantity of gold which the Ministry of Finance has endeavoured to procure annually from 1896 onwards is 350 pouds, about five tons, representing a value of twenty million francs at par (£800,000). The conditions of the purchase of gold are, however, quite different from those existing in other countries. The State has the monopoly of the purchase of gold. It has in this manner an enormous advantage in buying the metal in the interior, where in reality it costs it nothing but paper notes, which are printed by sovereign authority. The exploitation of the gold mines in Russia is for the most part in the hands of private contractors, who, thanks to the State monopoly, are compelled to sell the return from their establishments not at the rate of foreign exchanges, but at a fixed price imposed by the Government itself. This price is naturally far below par. We assume par to be at the rate of 3·44 francs to the gramme of pure gold; we see the enormous profit which accrues to the ministry when we note that it rarely pays the proprietors of gold mines more than 2·50 francs.

This price is paid in fiduciary money not covered. Under these conditions purchase of gold from abroad would be madness, and if Russia had been compelled to have recourse to it, the gold standard could never

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have been established, not even on paper. But although the Russian Empire figures in the seventh place on the list of gold-producing countries, with an annual mean return for the last sixteen years of about 2,200 pouds, or nearly thirty-five tons, the production would have to be increased by at least 14 per cent only to guarantee the possibility of maintaining in international exchange the appearance of a stable standard on a gold basis. Where is this 14 per cent to be found? Doubtless it exists in Siberia.

The immense northern districts of Verkhoyansk and Kolumsk are not shown in the gold statistics, and the fabulously rich province of the Pacific coast hardly contributes to them at all.

The immense northern country, twice as great as the territory of civilized nations in Europe, is nothing but a deadweight attached to the wings of the two-headed eagle of the Czars. Gold will not come to them from the North, for man cannot live there.

In presence of this bitter impossibility the persistence with which the Mongolian concession was demanded of the Manchu Dynasty is capable of explanation, and we might almost be surprised that Manchuria does not as yet form part of the concessions coveted by the Bank; but that would have been an exaction which the dynasty could not have accepted without dealing too heavy a blow to its dignity at home.

XVIII

The Nationalist Movement in China. Patriotic Hysteria. Movement at first anti-dynastic

THE Cassini Convention seemed to be in its immediate consequences as favourable to China as to Russia. It built up and sanctioned at the same time the close community of interests which was henceforth to bind the Ta-Tsing to Russian policy. It offered the dynasty Russian protection, and to Russia the possibility of guiding from behind the scenes all diplomatic negotiations with the West. And the mutual mistrust was for the time expressed only by the irregular situation which each of the two Powers had adopted with reference to the Mongul Princes. Meanwhile, at the very period when the Convention of Moscow was being declared as the first counter-stroke to the aggressive policy of the Westerns, another no less serious rebound from the imperialist madness of Europe began to make itself felt.

The sense of grievance against the foreigners provoked a nationalist movement, or, to be more accurate, at first a profound displeasure of the Chinese population in contact with Europeans. This displeasure, which had been accumulating in the mind of the masses for many years, a result of the commercial and reli-

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gious procedures described above, came to light with remarkable rapidity in every quarter in which resolute and skilful agitators were established. These agitators were members of the paltry fragments of former secret revolutionary societies, and by applying their old methods of popular seduction they succeeded in organizing a new and vast political association. It announced itself at the beginning, and this is very characteristic, as a gymnastic society.

These latter are in fact throughout the world and among all peoples the champions and guardians of national activity. This is natural. In reality there is in such societies a preparation for war. The hand is trained to the use of arms, the body is rendered supple, men are trained to overcome bodily fatigue by technical movements executed in combination, the corporate sense and faculty of obedience are exalted—in short, the gymnasts are practised in the accomplishment of an activity which in time of peace has no practical meaning, and, sport for its own sake being the outcome of a state of mind too refined to be understood by the masses, the possibility of an application for gymnastics is presupposed; the assumption is war, and, as a result from this assumption, exaltation of the nation to which the gymnasts belong. It is the same thing everywhere. In France gymnasts are noisy patriots, in England jingoes, in America yellows, in Germany militarists and imperialists, in Bohemia nationalists even to a crime, in Hungary unbearably patriotic. Nothing then can be less astonishing than that an analogous phenomenon should have come into being in China. It is important to add that gymnasts are young. And if they are already easy to fill with enthusiasm, to attract, to enrol, to

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seduce, in Europe, where independent reasoning is cultivated by preference, it is a matter of necessity that in China, where on most occasions the decisions of individuals are not guided by individual reasoning but by the suggestions of an environment, young men united in brigades afforded a display of enthusiastic obedience and blind passion which put them like a tool at the mercy of strong and skilful directors.

Now contrary to what on the authority of official sources is generally supposed in Europe, it was not the former anti-dynastic secret societies of Central and Southern China, which fomented the movement of the Boxers, so-called, but the nationalists, and, in the first rank, the teachers in the districts most contaminated by European barbarism. Recruiting, to this vast gymnastic society, was done by the agency of travelling agitators, men of letters for the most part, who by however superficial a knowledge of the classics, which they quoted at the right moments, naturally had a considerable ascendancy over the easily excited minds of students. Among the latter, moreover, there are to be found, far more frequently in China than among ourselves, nervous, hysterical, ecstatic subjects. As in France we see super-men, as conceived by Nietzsche, of fifteen years of age, who vaticinate in their French compositions, while others reach the sublime enthusiasm of patriotic mania by studying and imitating Pericles, Demosthenes, Hugo or Deroulède ; so, too, we see in China, but in an infinitely greater number, beardless prophets, who dream of reorganizing the world with Confucius ; others, disciples of Lao-tse, feel themselves to be the immediate incarnation of primordial energy ; lastly, some, nourished on the glorious chronicles of antiquity,

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believe themselves predestined to play the fabulous parts of liberators, reformers, revolutionaries, like that inspired peasant who succeeded in provoking the great revolt of the labouring masses not only to overthrow and drive out the foreign Mongol Dynasty of Tchengis-Khan, but even to raise himself to the imperial rank and prepare for China the happy era through which she passed under the dynasty of the Mings, his successors. These heroic foregatherings could in the present time of misfortune be directed against two adversaries only—in the first place the invading criminals from the West, in the second the Tsing Dynasty, Mauchu, foreign, like that of the Mongols.

The Western was the more immediate adversary, above all, for students inclined to respect the State which offers honours and places, and generally in China, as elsewhere, but scantily informed as to the internal political situation of the Empire. The European mischief, palpable, visible to all eyes, exasperated again and again the so easily impressionable mind of the Chinese adolescent. As the German schoolmaster for a long time preached hatred of the hereditary French enemy, as the French teacher thought it his duty during a no less long period to work for the formation of a thoroughly French spirit by inculcating, we know with what success, hatred or contempt for the German in the minds of young Frenchmen; so too the Chinese man of letters teaches his pupils, and represents to adults the turpitude of Europe, and the disaster of the Western invasion, hatching in this soil, which bears the impress of war; of hatred, and hidden fury, an abundant brood of sentiments of contempt for the foreigners and of

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enthusiasm for the venerable institutions of the nation so roughly outraged.

Young persons with a tendency to exaltation were quite naturally the best assistants of the agitators. As the believing masses among ourselves allow themselves to be impressed by apparent signs and wonders, so the Chinese crowd, yet more accessible to suggestion, is without difficulty carried away in the stream of ideas which seems to preside over the unreasonable conduct of an individual acting under the empire of influences not capable of explanation to the inexperienced logic of the people. And the crowd, once carried away, sees afterwards the proof of the greatness of the aspirations, to which it now sacrifices, in the suddenness and mysteriousness of the very seduction to which it has submitted. Given these psychical predispositions, nothing can astonish us less than the instantaneous eruption of nationalist enthusiasm changing the state of mind of whole populations in a few hours. Here for the rest we may see in a definite example the characteristic features of the conversion of a small town to the xenophobic movement.

The place was Hsiang-ning in Chan-si. In this spot an Americanized Swede had for some little time done the duties of Baptist missionary. He was, moreover, a poor young man full of enthusiasm, whom his superiors had sent to prepare the soil on which to install later a fixed mission with all the commercial organization which it involves. No grievance could be raised against this man by the population. One day there arrives a nationalist agitator of the Gymnastic Society. He makes in the morning a speech in front of the school, talking of the strangers who are preying on China,

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and of the necessity of rising against them. He further says, quoting numbers of classical phrases, that he who joins the Great Society will be invulnerable, and endowed with superior strength by the Spirit. In literary Chinese this is no more than a couplet on the force of enthusiasm ; but such utterances skilfully pronounced in the presence of the people were bound to be taken literally. The expectations of the agitator were not deceived. The unusual happened. A young boy of delicate appearance comes up, and, pronouncing verses in a dramatic tone, asks with ecstatic gestures to become a member of the Society. Hardly has the orator informed him that he will be admitted, when the young man falls down in a catalepsy, and some minutes afterwards rises again, his eyes fixed and wide open, vaticinating ardently, afterwards falling again, and in the end returning to consciousness ; the crowd, to its respectful amazement, notes that the inspired youth has no consciousness of what he has said and done. This proof of the supernatural influence which is exercised over the members of the Society convulses the people. The hysterical youth is watched and followed. He comes across the Swedish missionary standing at the door of the house which he inhabits. The young man addresses him, asking him if he is a foreign teacher. The missionary imprudently replies that he teaches the street children. The young hysteric is immediately seized with a violent attack of xenophobia, rolls his eyes, foams at the mouth, and remains motionless before the stranger with his fists doubled and raised. The latter withdraws quietly into his house ; the madman immediately follows him, and the stupid crowd begins to assume a menacing attitude. The

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hysteric notices at the entrance an enormous wooden chest, and weakly and small though he appears to be, raises it threateningly above his head. In the presence of this miracle there is an outburst of shouts from the people. The missionary retires into a bedroom, the hysteric puts back the chest and falls in a catalepsy. A band of soldiers then arrives, probably sent by the head of the town, anxious about incurring responsibility for an eventual murder, but the populace cry to them not to touch the inspired youth. The latter wakes up, but immediately falls again into the first hypnotic condition, runs through the house, seizes an enormous knife, and with his eyes still closed begins to brandish it like a sabre. In this attitude he faces the missionary, who believes himself lost. Meanwhile one of the soldiers intervenes, seizes the madman from behind, snatches the weapon from him, and throws it violently on to the ground. His comrades keep back the inquisitive crowd at the entrance of the court. During this time the missionary is passed over walls and gardens, and given a horse, and made to escape, while the crowd still waits in front of the house. When eight days later a messenger was sent from So-ping to see what had happened, the whole town was found to be enrolled in the xenophobic movement.

We see from this example how the simple nationalist propaganda has been able to influence the mental condition of immense masses. But we also see the facility with which skilful agitators can guide the affection or hatred of crowds towards aims in which they are personally interested. The character and names of the agitators were then the principal element in the popular movement.

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Now while at the beginning of the movement the agitators were only superficial and noisy patriots, and the propaganda, as a whole, wanted a single directing authority, the movement took quite a different character from the beginning of the year 1898. It is certain that the agitators and organizers who work directly upon the masses did not take stock of the situation in any definite form. They did no more than themselves submit to the suggestions of their environment. The shock had been communicated from spheres outside their influence. Two causes contributed at this time to change the aspect and aim of the xenophobic movement, two causes which, however, had one and the same effect: to make the anti-foreign movement an anti-dynastic movement. These two causes were incarnated in two groups of individuals who took possession of the agitation. The one was the Buddhist clergy, the other the fragments of the Chinese reaction, which, accustomed to impute the misfortunes of the people to the indignity of the foreign dynasty, began to discover afresh in the bad conditions of the march of the affairs of the country a manifestation of divine wrath against a people forgetful of the holy doctrine of Confucius, which proclaims that it is the duty of all to dispossess a dynasty incapable of governing.

The remnants of the Society of *Big Knives*, of the *White Lotus*, and other secret associations, which in the beginning of the nineteenth century had endeavoured to put revolutionary teaching into practice, and had inscribed on their banners the time-honoured motto of the reaction: *Sê-Tsing, tza Ming*, "Down with the Tsing, up with the Ming," all those who, living on the fringe of society, believed themselves unjustly

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condemned to poverty and misfortune, all those in the Mandarinate who believed themselves to be the victims of dark intrigues ; in a word, all those who in certain parts of the Empire were discontented, asked for nothing better than to make the Manchus responsible for the sorrows of the country.

In the interior provinces on the Yang-tse this movement necessarily remained insignificant ; these districts are so distant, so tranquil, so industrious, so rich, so little influenced by the central Government, and so little in contact with Europeans, that any considerations, outside economic considerations, are happily impossible in these parts ; and thus, as in these regions, there has never been any knowledge of the Sino-Japanese war, the recollection of which was the first agent in promoting Chinese nationalism, in the same way the entirely negative policy of the concessions, and the immediately mischievous policy of a certain friendship for Europeans at the Court, a policy which was translated solely into fresh European annoyances with regard to the Chinese, failed to upset or even excite the countless populations of the central provinces.

Everywhere, on the contrary, where the hateful influence of the dynasty in favour of the West made itself felt, nothing was more easy than to raise the suspicion of treason against the Ta-Tsing, and, logically from the Chinese point of view, this was a well-founded grievance. Had not the dynasty disposed of territories whose administration it had usurped ? Had it not granted concessions to strangers in order to maintain itself on the throne ? Had it not in all its relations with the Western Powers continuously sacrificed the interests of the Chinese people to its

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personal interests? And there was something more. Did not Prince Kang-you-wei, the traitor in English pay, the preacher of Western methods, wish both to deliver the Chinese to the exploitation of the English, and to sow disorder by intriguing against his own dynasty? And did not this dynasty give him a free hand, doubtless under the pressure of English influence? And, to sum up the account, had one ever heard tell of this Manchu Dynasty except when there was a question of paying for it, or submitting to the results of its stupidities? The propagandists of the old Societies held good cards.

Certainly the foreigner was the enemy, only this enemy could do nothing without at least the tacit complicity of the dynasty. The duty of the latter would have been to rein in the development of foreign influence in China. It did nothing of the kind; whether that it had not the power—and in that case it was necessary to replace it according to the classic lesson—or was really criminal and anti-Chinese. Now its foreign origin, the new manners introduced by it into the Empire—the serious question of wearing the pig-tail for instance—rendered this hypothesis plausible; but then it must be punished, driven out, destroyed.

Such was in their broader lines the meaning of the countless speeches, pamphlets, placards, and other manifestations of the propaganda of the ancient anti-dynastic societies. Furthermore they resumed the ancient rites, repeated the ancient invocations, wore afresh the ancient emblems, sure that the suggestive force of these mysterious asides would not fail in its effect upon the mind of the Chinese crowd, so easily carried away.

XIX

Intervention of the Buddhist Clergy in the Movement. Documents and Proofs. The Clergy work for Russia

MEANWHILE, and this is a point of the highest importance, although it has been systematically excluded from all discussion in consequence of the absence of documents, there was manifested concurrently, or rather below, the propaganda of the secret societies, on their way to absorb the gymnasts, another influence, which at one stroke gave to the movement its own true character, its cohesion, its field of culture and manœuvring. This was the pan-Buddhist movement, which adapted itself to circumstances.

Since the rupture which occurred in 1892 between the Holy See of Lhasa and the Manchu Dynasty, the principal pre-occupation of the clergy (over and above that of securing the help of a stronger worldly monarch) could only be to demonstrate the power of Buddhism to the Ta-Tsing, and to draw as much material or moral profit as possible from the embarrassment in which this selfish and feeble dynasty should have been involved. To prove to the dynasty the necessity for the broken concordat by placing it

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in the impossibility of maintaining itself on the throne, was to be the finest and most astute triumph of religion and policy. All that was required was to repeat the tragic episodes which had preceded the fall of the Yuans or the Mings abandoned by the clergy at the moment when they would have had the greatest need of its moral support, thrown, in punishment of their pride, as a helpless prey to the furies of a discontented people and a manifestly superior invader.

The Mings had been overthrown because Lhasa had rallied to the cause of the Manchus. Could not the Tsings be overthrown by taking the Russian Dynasty under the vast protecting wings of the Church? It was indispensable to make the experiment. Circumstances, in fact, had placed Lhasa in the alternative either of remaining isolated between the Chinese enemy, the English enemy, and the disturbing indifference of Russia, and of allowing itself to be gradually annihilated in the inevitable shocks between these three monsters, or of resolutely taking the line of supporting one of the three against the others, in order to deserve its gratitude, to render itself indispensable, and erect once again the spiritual omnipotence of the Grand Lama into a dogma resting on realities. Effective influence upon the life of China (however mysterious this influence remained to the Chinese themselves) was to remain the touchstone of the greatness of the Church, and this influence, in face of the unpardonable affront which the Manchu Dynasty had inflicted on Thibet in the Sikkim affair, could only be manifested by a consequent and pitiless agitation against the authority of the Ta-Tsing in China.

There was, of course, no such imprudence committed

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as to advertise from the beginning clerical interference in the anti-dynastic movement which already existed owing to the labours of the old secret societies, now masters of the xenophobic gymnasts. It was not the revolutionaries who were converted to the doctrines of Fô ; it was the bonzes of Fô who adhered to the revolutionary associations. It was also the extreme benevolence of the directors of monasteries, the approval of monks, and the prayers of the faithful, which, in the eyes of the masses, ensured a more and more considerable moral prestige to the anti-dynastic movement.

It would be rash to claim that the crowd of subaltern clergy accomplished this right-about-face against the dynasty, and for the militant radicalism, in full knowledge of the cause, and in a spirit of discipline or deference towards the oligarchy at Lhasa.

Clerical discipline only exists for the Buddhist monasteries ; the immense majority of the clergy obey exclusively the uncontrollable aspirations which come to light in their environment ; but it must not be forgotten that the mutual hospitality of the bonzes is great, and that quite naturally the news brought by a travelling priest under the head of information may have a powerful influence upon the decisions of his brethren.

These travelling priests, or pilgrims, are at all times very numerous in the north and centre of China ; but at the exact time when the anti-dynastic movement took its flight they pullulated to an extent which roused the astonishment of the people. From that time nothing is more natural than to think that among them at this period were numerous missionaries of great dignitaries.

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"In the province of Chan-si," for example, relates a man of business since established at Ourga, "there were regular processions of mendicant bonzes. There was not a house which remained unvisited by them on several occasions. They professed to be coming from different places, also to be on their way to different countries. They did not give the impression of being people all journeying to one and the same locality with one religious aim. They willingly stayed and liked gossiping. They told the peasants and the citizens who welcomed them, that in the province whence they came the people were rising and that soon great events would take place. They also prayed for the salvation of the people, and pronounced maledictions against the great who made the nation suffer. They thus threw disquietude into the souls of men, preparing them to receive all the revolutionary ferments. . . ."

They never spoke to the populace of the great bonzes, nor, much less, of Lhassa. We may even suppose with much probability that they had never heard tell of the Tchangtcha-Khoutouktou, of the De-çri, or of the Dalaï-Lama. But they were marvellous propagators of new political ideas among the clergy in virtue even of their ignorance. In making themselves welcome for the night, or only for a meal, in the house of a bonze or superior of a monastery, they certainly never failed in their duty to pay their debt of gratitude by the minute account of what they had seen, heard and done in the house of another bonze, or in another monastery. And as they always took care to exaggerate the position of this bonze and the renown of this convent with the simple object of elevating their own importance, they contributed

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enormously without themselves suspecting the fact to the creation in the actual spot where they were sojourning of exactly the state of mind which they professed to have encountered in known places or in the society of personages of high rank.

“Thou wouldst be amazed, O Sinless Lama,” writes a bonze of Mongolian nationality, member of a monastery at Ning-hsia on the Hoang-ho, in January, 1900, to Alacha-Khamba, high priest at Ourga, “if thou wert to hear tell what is happening among the most exalted personages in the Empire. The Lamas who visit our monastery on pilgrimage bring news capable of causing alarm to the boldest. We have learned from these eye-witnesses that in the great towns of the Empire the Lamas themselves have abandoned their austere vocations, and endeavour to save the people from distress. The Empire is badly governed. Foreigners oppress the people. And the great Khan is incapable of protecting his subjects. So they say. And they relate what such or such a Lama has done, and how such and such a Lama maintains religion, and preaches resistance for the welfare of all animated beings. At Lan-tcheou the faithful met and swore on the six syllables that they would save the people. They carry banners on which they have inscribed the six syllables in Chinese characters. And in other places they have done the same. Lamas ought not to hold themselves apart from this schism protected by the holy syllables, and the great Lamas are in favour of it. The great Khan will be overthrown, and the Mings will be restored, for they governed the people for its happiness and in the path of religion. . . .

This simple-minded letter, so full of assumption, admirably depicts the condition of mind of the clergy

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and the ultimate character of the anti-dynastic movement. We see demonstrated in it before all things two facts, which are evident from the general development of events, but which it is very interesting to behold ingenuously exposed by a reporter ignorant of the general currents of opinion.

There is first the revolutionary oath by the "six holy syllables," and their utilization as an inscription on seditious banners. We know that these syllables, the tabernacles of Thibetan Buddhism, are the following : *Om-ma-ni-pad-me-houm !* which are monosyllabized from the Sanskrit, and signify : *O Jewel in the Lotus !*

It is only the fact that in Thibet nobody has ever understood this meaning that has been able to cause it to be adopted as the supreme expression of the Buddhist faith ; for the jewel in the lotus is the lingam, and this symbol, at the time when Buddhism was developed in Thibet, was the distinctive sign of an Indian sect, brahmanic and demoniac, which was exactly the opposite to the austere teaching of Buddha.

However, *Om-ma-ni-pad-me-houm* is the alpha and omega of Buddhism ; the syllables are found in gigantic Thibetan characters engraved on the rocky flanks of mountains ; they are found imperceptibly small on rings and medallions ; they are inscribed on the wheel of the praying-mills, and on the strips of paper with which objects are marked placed under the special protection of the divinity ; they are pronounced aloud, under the breath, or murmured by countless Buddhists in manifold circumstances of life. Adopted as a rallying point by a collection of men pursuing the same aims, they sanctify this aim, encourage partisans, seduce waverers, intimidate

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adversaries, and in the eyes of the faithful guarantee a successful issue.

Inscribed upon the revolutionary banners they gave the character of a crusade to the anti-dynastic movement. How many members of the I-khe-touan Society, called later the Boxers in Europe, really understood this Buddhist symbol, is a question as superfluous as it is difficult to solve. We are obliged to admit that numerous Chinese on the coast (uninitiated for that matter) who have been questioned on the nature of the movement never took any account of them ; but it has also been ascertained that the fact of having to take a mysterious oath on initiation, and to venerate inscriptions whose character and meaning were alike incomprehensible, added much to the fascination of the revolutionary society. The ancient great secret societies had also made use of mysterious formulas and inscriptions, and thus it was easy for men to believe that the I-khe-touan were only a resurrection of the Big Knives.

The principal emblems of the I-khe-touan differ radically from those of these ancient revolutionaries. Numerous specimens of flags, amulets, and placards show that these emblems, when they bear Chinese characters, consciously baffle the ideas of the Chinese, for these characters constitute a non-sense, but this non-sense becomes a mysterious and formidable password. It is edited in hieroglyphics, which are pronounced like the six syllables, but symbolize heterogeneous ideas. There are some whose meanings are : *calm, sock, thee, eight, splendour, traffic*, ideas represented by characters which read : *an, ma, ni, pa, ming, hong*, evidently a bad spelling of *om-ma-ni-pad-me-houm*. There are also other emblems which

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appear so much the more remarkable to the people, because they only bear hieroglyphics unknown in Chinese ; now the majority of these latter are simply ornamented with the holy formula in Thibetan writing, quadrangular, in manifold styles.

These facts show, with all the clearness that can be desired, that at a given moment the Buddhist clergy took possession of the anti-dynastic movement. And it is impossible but that, in clerical circles at any rate, there was rejoicing that religion once more manifested her vitality in patronizing and organizing this vast agitation, whose aim was the renascence of the times of the concordat.

Meanwhile the words of the monk of Ning-hsia above quoted make yet another very significant fact stand out. This is that the higher clergy made themselves, in association with the Big Knives, not only adversaries of the Tsings, but, further, the advocate of the Mings. This is one of those master-strokes which are the speciality of churches—to play the nationalist part in each of the countries where the Church possesses influence, and thus put characteristic passions at the service of the clergy. With this aim falsifications of history have little importance. The Mings whom the monk of Ning-hsia, and doubtless his superiors, would like to see restored, certainly governed China in the path of happiness, but they were the irrepressible contemners of the Buddhist clergy. And the simple fact that the clergy knew how to flatter Chinese national feeling on this question—quite a Platonic proceeding for that matter, the race of the Mings having long been extinct—denotes that it was not in the lower spheres of the Church that the inspirers of this surprising diplomatic change of front were to be found.

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If, then, to conclude, it is incontestable that where the clergy have influence, there they made themselves, if not the masters, at least the uncontrollable main-spring of the I-khe-touan movement, the strange part played by the Church seems to be still more definitely characterized by the fact that where the Buddhist clergy had no influence, in the basin of the lower Yang-tse and in the south, the I-khe-touan never existed. This is a genuine proof *a contrario*, that the I-khe-touan worked for the clergy in the end. The ancient secret societies, White Lotus, Big Knives and others, always had the centre of their forces in the central provinces. The great revolution of the Tai-ping, which was never able to gain the northern provinces, confirms this. And it is in truth surprising that the resurrection of the remnants of the Tai-pings should have remained without effect precisely in the locality in which they celebrated their greatest triumphs, while among populations formerly indifferent their agitation seems to have provoked a veritable paroxysm of revolution. It is remarked that there was a very clear line of demarcation of the sphere in which the I-khe-touan were active; and were there no other proofs this line would show that the domain of the I-khe-touan coincides nearly exactly with that of Buddhism in China. That the revolutionaries of Tchi-li, and still more the Europeans established in the concessions, should have known nothing of this, is easily explained. The former obeyed the current of opinion created and fed in the manner of which we have an idea after the examples given above. As for the Europeans, trusting in their diplomatists, they never scented the immense movement till a time when the clergy had effaced themselves to let

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the prepared events take their free course, at a moment when the spheres of diplomacy were directly influenced in the most unexpected fashion by the rebound of the revolutionary agitation upon the Manchu Dynasty. The only European authorities who were really informed of what was going on behind the veil of coarse ignorance and stupid pretentiousness of the diplomatic circles, were naturally the Russians, and with reason. The work was being done for the Empire of the Czars, and its directors were well instructed.

It is naturally difficult to establish at the present time the manner in which this community of action made itself felt, at the period in question, in the capture of the anti-dynastic movement by the clergy. But here is a complete proof that it existed. After the journey of the Buriat Khamba-Lama to St. Petersburg, another student of the academy on the Lake of Geese was sent to the Court of Lhasa. Like the first emissary, he went there, officially, to complete his theological studies. This Buriat student who, as his name Daltieff indicates, is a Russian subject, had attracted attention by his intense mental culture, his extreme skill, from the diplomatic point of view, and by an intellectual liberty, such that neither the national question, nor the religious question, which, however, proposed themselves in a very complicated form, were ever able to take hold of him. This really exceptional man left the Lake of Geese at the beginning of the year 1898. Hardly had he arrived at Lhasa, when he remitted to the De-çri messages from the Bandido-Khamba, and the Bogdo-Guiguen ; he put off his humble appearance as a student to take in hand the more difficult and more important function of chief of the staff of the oligarchy of Lhasa. He took

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the appointment of general secretary to the De-çri, the worldly director of the affairs of the Church, that is to say that he guided the external policy of the Empire of the Dalaï-Lama.

Further, in proportion as the news of the progress of the agitation arrived at Ourga to the Chancellor of the Bogdo-Guiguen and the Russian Consul, care was taken to hasten the works of the Trans-Manchurian and to reinforce the troops destined to watch over the security of the riverain districts.

The cause of the Czars and the cause of the Lamas were thus developing along a good road.

XX

Capture of the Movement by the Dynasty. Its Diversion against the Foreigners. The "Coup d'État" of Tsou-Hsi. The National Movement becomes general Brigandage

THE position of the Manchu Dynasty at this moment was one of the least enviable. The revolutionary movement put its very existence in question. On the other hand the presumptuous interference of the Westerns adopted less and less tolerable manners. Between the revolution, fundamentally xenophobic but anti-dynastic in deed, and the foreign menace which demanded the suppression of xenophobia, the situation of the Court was untenable, for in the event of a conflagration it no longer possessed, as on former occasions, the last resource of retiring into its native country, Manchuria, and awaiting the return of better days. Such a retreat would have signified a simple and shameful submission to the embarrassing friendship of Russia, or it would have brought on a ridiculous and disastrous war with the Khou Khous, brigands who ruled as undisputed masters in Manchuria in every quarter in which Russian troops had not already established themselves under

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the pretext of guarding the railway and maintaining peace in the country districts.

The ties with Lhasa being broken, those with the Westerns under extreme tension, those with the people cut off, those with Russia inferring only the appearance of a disinterested good understanding, the most clear-sighted members of the dynasty at last perceived that it was necessary to adopt measures in order to save the situation. To submit to the European demands was, at first, materially impossible, the xenophobic disposition of the people being stronger than the persuasive authority of the Government; it also meant a profitless sacrifice to the wrath of the people and of the invaders; it meant abdication without even testing fortune. To implore Lhasa in order to appease and dissipate the popular movement was humiliation at a dead loss, for Lhasa, though capable of provoking such a movement by insinuation, was incapable of reining it in, the necessary organization and therefore discipline being wanting. To lean exclusively upon Russia, which, in the minds of the Chinese Princes, was bound to know the situation of the Tsings thoroughly, was to call in the stranger against the people, and, in the event of effective succour, to render all further tranquillity among the people dependent on the Russian force planted in China; it was to hand over the Chinese nation to Russian administration; it was to declare oneself superfluous and to be crushed between the contempt of the people and the contempt of the suzerain. The advisers of the dynasty were not shrewd enough to see that it was possible to lean on Russia while posing before the West as a victim to this formidable neighbour, whose too open interference must necessarily

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bring it into collision with the West. Li-hung-chang, who alone saw this possibility, was then in disgrace at Canton.

No more could the dynasty think of retiring into the central provinces, where for the moment no anti-dynastic movement had been displayed, for it knew only too well that in those regions it was, so to speak, unknown, that it would meet with no sympathy there, and that the Governors of those provinces would protest with all their strength against the embarrassing and disorganizing presence of a Court in flight. In short, the mere fact of retiring from districts in which its authority was direct would show the people that this authority was factitious or detestable, so that the actual presence of the Court might have the effect of preparing the soil for an extension of the revolt.

There remained one expedient only—to capture the anti-dynastic movement, turn it from its course, and win over the people by recognizing its claims as justifiable.

But capturing the popular movement meant resisting the demands of the Europeans, it meant provoking war, and a necessarily unsuccessful war. And among these disagreeable prospects the blackest was that the dynasty could not accomplish this change of front to any good purpose secretly, gradually, without alarming the Westerns, and without openly supporting the popular fury against the foreigners. It was necessary to act in full daylight before the people in order that it might see the honesty of the nationalist intentions of the Court and its firm will to oppose the Westerns.

The Tsou-hsi, that is to say the Empress Dowager, found, in conjunction with Tuan, the most determined

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Prince of the family, the most intelligent, and the most beloved by the troops, the proper means for the theatrical setting of so considerable a stroke. The young Emperor Kwang-su, tuberculous and feeble, who was the sole autocrat responsible for the misfortunes of the people, would be deposed. In the eyes of the masses it was his personal deficiencies in insight and energy that had given power to the Anglophil cabals favourable to the traitorous procedures of Kang-you-wei, cabals which had triumphed by procuring the banishment to Canton of the one man up to the level of events, but a friend to Russia, Li-hung-chang. The Empress Dowager, guardian of the Emperor, was to govern in person. The son of Prince Tuan was to be proclaimed heir to the throne, an infallible means of ensuring the fidelity of Prince Tuan and of making him the enthusiastic champion of the existing state of affairs. The *Triad of Tigers*, the most powerful element in the Government, composed of the Minister of the Court, Li-lien-ying, the Chancellor of the Empire, Sou-tchouan-li, and the generalissimo, Yung-Lu, was naturally won over to this palace revolution, which would permit them not only to consolidate their position, but further to proceed to great reforms. These reforms were to be based on a new edition of the organic arrangements of the Six Tablets of Khang-hsi. They would have a definitely Chinese character, excluding Western views, which are not appropriate to the Chinese mind. The further promulgation of these measures of reorganization (their enumeration would take us too far), was the condition of the assent of the *Triad of Tigers*.

The revolution took place on the 6th of January, 1900.

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The internal situation of China changed immediately and completely. The Westerns at last perceived that there were internal complications in China to be feared. They learned that for years immense popular currents had been in process of creation, and perhaps even stupendous intrigues woven. They took note that the I-khe-touan (whose name they had never heard), were not only an immense association, but further a mass, if not under military discipline, at least armed, whose xenophobic tendencies were manifest. And they saw with amazement mingled with alarm that in spite of all the assurances and explanations of the Government the movement was assuming a more and more aggressive character against foreigners. Recourse was had to the ordinary source of information in difficult circumstances : information was gathered from the missionaries, no member of the more or less diplomatic body at Peking having been capable of studying the Chinese in a fashion sufficient to allow him to form a personal opinion on the affairs which he was supposed to direct. Mr. Rockhill, the excellent student of China, thought it more useful to enrich science with precious ethnological gifts than to commit himself to the platitudes of a diplomatic service which could only injure American trade and policy. The missionaries dictated their opinion to the embassies, which was that the situation was critical for themselves and that the dynasty seemed powerless to improve it. The diplomatists at Peking, in presence of such grave news, valiantly resolved to do nothing, incapable as they were of giving advice to their respective Governments. They accordingly awaited events with the serenity of ruminants who refuse to leave burning stables.

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As a matter of fact, moreover, the situation was much more serious than it had been represented to be by the missionaries consulted as experts. The dynasty was not only incapable of stemming the movement, it was even powerless to guide it. It was obliged to allow itself to be carried away by the torrent of the lower instincts of the populace.

A popular movement is more easy to capture than to guide. The Court had perhaps hoped to be able to render it abortive by turning it into a number of more or less platonic manifestations against the Westerns ; it perhaps even had the idea of intimidating Europe, and of taking advantage of this to conclude pacific arrangements favourable to its dignity. But there was henceforth a new element in the agitation ; it was no longer the defeat of the Europeans that was alone wanted ; before all things disorder was wanted, war, battle, violence, brigandage.

The political movement was doubled with a criminal movement. Innumerable agricultural labourers in distress, entire populations forced into beggary in consequence of bad harvests, an army of vagabonds, of tramps, and, lastly, the immense pack of those who prefer to live by crime rather than work, gave an alarming character to the activity of the I-khe-touan. Disturbances were inevitable. Was it necessary to employ the army to the greater profit of the foreigners against the rebels who, in great part, claimed to be the incarnation of the national cause ? Was it not better to guide these disturbances against the strangers, and preserve neutrality oneself so far as it was possible ; or, if this was not possible, to leave the army free in its action, while leaving the impotence of the supreme authority to be inferred ?

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Meanwhile the first violent displays of xenophobia had come to pass, and showed that the dynasty had deceived itself once more in favouring the national feeling. It was discovered that the Nationalists had practically been simple tradesmen, annoyed not at seeing the people suffer and the State in danger, but at seeing their private affairs compromised. They had been very ready indeed to join the I-khe-touan Society, to submit to the mysterious trials of initiation, to see themselves reflected in the splendour of their noble intentions, to swear, to promise to sacrifice everything, in theory, with the aim of saving the nation, and thereby the possibility of quietly looking after their own businesses ; but at the actual moment at which the stern reality of politics took the place of speeches the last ideal became incapable of realization : peaceful work no longer existed, and, what was worse, it was noted with terror that those who committed acts of violence had no respect whatever for the work and property of others.

The militant I-khe-touan were necessarily all those who had not or did not wish to have regular work ; those who in excesses of violence had nothing to lose and everything to gain ; those in whose eyes every established and working tradesman was forthwith a rich man, worthy to be pillaged in war, as he has the power to oppress in time of peace. Thus it happened that after the first acts of revolution, in an extremely short space of time, the ardour of the populations, who had been I-khe-touanized by clerical insinuations and the Nationalist snobbery of the well-affected, completely collapsed ; fear of the militant and militarized I-khe-touan replaced the anathemas launched against the Ta-Tsing, the traitors, and the Si-yang-jen,

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the enemies ; and in places they ended in invoking the protection of the authorities against the violence of those whom the dynasty itself had recognized as the true defenders of China.

The popular movement was replaced by a movement of the populace. The phenomenon which has come to pass in the course of every great revolution was bound by psychological necessity to be reproduced in China ; the idealism of Mirabeau only survives in the dumb minds of the middle class, while outside reigns the Terror, the madness of the disinherited, carried forward by the populace. National feeling, patriotism, religion, morality, everything was a pretext for deeds of violence directed not only against the foreigners, but often too against Chinese accused of inclinations towards Europe, whose sole crime was the possession of property coveted by the rascality.

Insecurity considered in itself outside any idea of war or revolution appeared then to the industrious and peaceful population much more intolerable than all the exactions and injustices formerly endured in time of peace. Men had allowed themselves to be superficially influenced by the clerical and Nationalist propaganda, but had welcomed it because they had something to defend against traitors and enemies. Now, it was perceived that, whatever happened, whether they followed the rebels or kept quiet, there was everything to lose and nothing to gain. The rebels were no longer revolutionaries ; they certainly claimed to be putting into practice the theory of the real I-khe-touan, but they listened to instigations coming from the Court ; they certainly waged the anti-foreign crusade, but, failing strangers, they slaked their fury on Chinese in comfortable circumstances.

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The central Government certainly believed them to be animated with the breath of patriotism, and ready to risk everything for the national welfare, but in reality they were only men without character, ravening bandits, pretorians at loose ends.

Thus the immense majority of the population was a prey to a state of mind which was characterized by a deep but platonic hatred towards the foreigner, the origin of evil, by a terrible uncertainty as to the future, which depended on the issue of the struggle with the internal and external enemy, and by an insuperable mental distress, which rendered it the victim of any suggestion, however futile that might be. The people disappeared as an actor in the drama. Suddenly there remained nothing but the populace and the aristocracy ; and thus we look on at the unique spectacle of the Imperial Dynasty as propagator and support of the claims of the mob. The fortunes of the Court were those of the dregs of the people. The Ta-Tsing became the ring-leaders of a filthy mob-rule.

The army, naturally, fraternized with the populace. Every mercenary conceals a brigand, as, according to the Buddhist principle, every officer conceals a professional assassin. The dynasty could no longer find counsel.

The violent acts of the Boxers (militant I-khe-touan) had exasperated the foreigners, who demanded satisfaction and compensation. The Court could not yield : the smallest concession would have excited even the fury of the middle-class I-khe-touan, who complained of the Boxers, but hated the Westerns yet more. It was necessary to stake all to save all : to utilize the Boxers and the army against the foreigners.

In presence of this prospect, so sinister in ap-

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pearance, the dynasty of the Ta-Tsing, contrary to the view universally adopted, risked nothing, neither in the improbable event of a decisive victory, nor in the too certain one of a lamentable defeat. Li-hung-chang, from his elevated post far from the intrigues and meannesses of the dynasty, had provided for this from Canton, with the aid of the Russian Government.

XXI

Russia saves the Dynasty at the last Extremity. The Integrity of China guaranteed. The tributary Countries abandoned to Russia. The Convention of Canton. Documentary Vestiges of this secret Convention. Boxerism an Episode in Russo-Buddhist Transactions

RUSSIA had now reached her ends. She had indirectly, but so much the more successfully, brought the Ta-Tsing Dynasty into a situation from which it could not emerge by its own strength. In its struggle for existence it had for several years so consistently mistaken its means, that it was at the mercy of whosoever was so good as to save it. Russia alone had any interest in maintaining it. Its fall would have been followed by a European protectorate, which would doubtless have robbed Russia of the fruits of her policy. An independent China, or at least apparently such, was the only possible means of preventing an economic invasion of the Chinese hinterland. A dynasty entirely in the hands of Russia, whether through gratitude or prudence, which should still retain its administrative authority in the country, and still be able to oppose, by means of its

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admirable force of inertia, the encroachments of the Westerns, so annoying to Russia—this was a thousand times more advantageous than even an annexation or a recognized protectorate of Northern China; for this involved hardly any outlay, and made the jealousies of the Powers appear to be without foundation.

But if Russia had an interest in maintaining the integrity and independence of the Empire of the Ta-Tsing so far as those countries were concerned whose administration she could not profitably take in hand, and in which she would not have been able to defend her domination against rivals, the case was by no means the same as soon as there was question of the parts of China called external, which, situated beyond the competition of Europe, formed the route indispensable to Russia for the pursuit of her plans. Manchuria, already crossed by the railway; Mongolia, which would be crossed by the most important link in the line—Tsungaria, the ancient route between the West and the East—all these immense countries, submitted to Russian control, must doubtless develop themselves in such a manner as to prepare the advent of the Muscovite era in the whole of the Far East.

From the point of view of ulterior Russian policy, it was necessary to lay hands upon these countries as soon as possible. Manchuria had to be contemplated, not as a territory more than twice the size of France, harbouring twelve millions of Chinese difficult to govern, and producing quantities of merchandize difficult to bring into circulation, but as a geographical unit, which would close the fatal gap, administratively and strategically speaking, which existed between the Pacific and Lake Baikal; as a bridge uniting Tchi-li and Siberia; as a basis for the slanting forward

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movement of forces destined to be able to watch the residence of the dynasty and also of the European diplomatists. In the same way, it was necessary to form a conception of Mongolia as a sea of sand which washes the northern provinces of China, and whose undisputed master would also be, as soon as he pleased, master of those provinces. Mongolia has been from all time the strategic route to China, and history teaches us that to dispose of this station for the domination of China is virtually to dispose of the empire itself. And in an analogous fashion Tsungaria, or Chinese Turkestan, was to be regarded as an object which, in spite of its ancient splendour, was for the moment worth nothing in itself, but was to acquire a considerable importance with the development of the Russian plans. Without Russia the dynasty was lost. Every condition which Russia should impose in return for her effective help was consequently granted in anticipation. The occasion was unique. Russia could go as far as the jealousy of her rivals would allow without provoking a conflict. The Russian Government then, along with the Chinese, sought to organize a common action *in extremis*, in order to assume a position in face of those coming events which escaped their immediate influence.

Li-hung-chang had observed the development of the situation. Being more devoted to Russia than to the West, more devoted, however, to the Ta-Tsing than to Russia, but still more to the cause of China than to the cause of the Manchu Princes, he contemplated the possibility of being useful to all these four factors at once, while marshalling the advantages to be accorded to each according to the intensity of his sympathies. He made a strong effort to choose the

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least of the manifold evils that could be brought on by a general conflagration.

Through the mouth of his adopted son, Lord Li, he had protested in vain against the approval given to the first xenophobic disturbances. Immediately after the palace revolution of January 6, he had caused it to be explained to the Empress that the impunity of the brigands would be followed by a rising of the populace, which would irremediably compromise the army and the Court with the dregs of the people. He was not listened to. Furthermore, it would probably have been already too late.

Li's intention was to invoke immediately, without stirring complications with Europe, the support of Russia, to conclude an official alliance with her, to grant her considerable privileges in the external provinces, to get the Chinese army reorganized by Russians, and in this way to oppose a formidable Asiatic block to the ambitions of the maritime Powers. His son could not even set forth this skilful and salutary plan. The Manchu military party, dynastic to the last gasp, dominated in such a manner as to render any discussion idle.

Li remained none the less in constant communication with the Russian Government. For China he was the only man on a level with the emergency ; for Russia he was the only man with whom negotiations could be carried on in prevision of future events. Alone, without effective support from the Court, seeing more and more distinctly the abyss in which the dynasty must founder, and with it the economic welfare of the people, he resolved in fact to save the dynasty in spite of itself, and to consolidate the existence of China by freely flinging concessions to her enemies and her embarrassing friends.

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It was necessary to protect the independence of China properly so called in order to calm the xenophobia and raise the spirits of the people ; to maintain the dynasty in order to show the people its vitality as the principal element in resistance to the West ; to keep for China the open door to the competition of the Westerns, and to introduce reforms to appease the civilizing mania, and at the same time strengthen the Chinese administration ; to buy the friendship of Russia by giving her a free hand in the tributary States of the north, which were not originally Chinese, but constituted the private domain of the dynasty. This was hard upon the Court in its own possessions, but it was punished, one might say, for its want of skill ; it was at the same time excellent for China, which, with the Russian friendship, was protected against the West, and had its liberty assured on the Russian side for the whole of the enormous period which would elapse before Russia was economically in a position to risk her conglomeration with Northern China.

The desires of Russia, although they were different at root from those of Li, curiously coincided with the new plan of the great Chinese statesman as to their immediate aim. That to which Russia would probably not have ventured to aspire, if the Court had put itself on her side from the beginning in order to repress the revolts, she could now have offered to her as the price of a compromising benevolence, which would be translated not only by an Asiatic policy friendly to China, but by a general policy hostile to the European-American-Japanese concert, which, in virtue of its ambiguous character, could not be brought to bear good fruit without extreme difficulty.

Was Li authorized by the Court to save the situation

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by making overtures to Russia? Was he sufficiently audacious to pledge the fortunes of the Empire on his own responsibility? Had he hoped to be still able to suppress the revolts of the I-khe-touan in time? And did he change his mind at the last moment in presence of the more and more compromised position of the dynasty?

His son himself does not know. This is the great secret which this terrible man kept to carry with him into the grave. Furthermore, whether the one or the other hypothesis is correct, Li, thanks to the enormous authority which he enjoyed in Russia as in China, could act personally and without authorization as representing the empire. What he did was necessarily bound to be ratified by the dynasty, provided his intervention was regarded by the other parties to the transaction as valid.

It was under these extraordinary conditions that, in the month of March, 1900, he conducted negotiations at Canton, or had confidential interviews with a Russian emissary, whose qualifications do not seem as yet to have been divulged. These interviews were decisive for the further conduct of the affairs in which Russia and the Ta-Tsing were interested.

As soon, however, as they had reached their end, Russia proceeded to a series of diplomatic and military operations which confounded the constellation of forces in the Far East, while the dynasty, put in the foreground, the business being settled, allowed events to follow their course with apathy—at the most trying to retard them as much as possible, in the common interest.

The Canton interviews have happily left some very interesting fragments, which definitely determine the

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character of the events which took place in the sequel.

These written fragments show, through the numerous allusions, the manifold secret understandings, and the laconic character of their statements, the greatness of the political conceptions, the marvellous spread of Russian activity, and in a no less degree the amazing shrewdness, the unparalleled political sense, and the superhuman genius of the man who on this occasion incarnated the millenary civilization of his race. They are the direct expression and immediate consequence of the history of the last thirty years of Russo-Chinese relations, such as has just been related.

These fragments consist of three documents, or, rather, confidential communications sent after the Canton interviews to the organs of the Russian Government on the Sibero-Chinese frontier. The first communication is a telegram, in a previously arranged language, which announces the success of the negotiations, and advises pushing on "the action in Manchuria and Mongolia"; the nature of this action will be explained later on. The second is a letter in Chinese from the highest official at Canton to his son, director of telegraphs on the Russian frontier, giving details of Li's opinion, and containing the third, an unsigned report in Russian, enumerating the results of the interviews.

Here is the translation of these documents—

[TELEGRAM.]

"Twelfth day of the second month.

"From Canton by Peking and Chang-tzia-kau to the Head of the Telegraph, Mai-mai-tcheng.

"The Viceroy has come to an arrangement with the Ou dignitary, on the subject of the Fô agitation,

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on the basis already specified. Inform Kou and Sou that they must move in the affair of the gold mine concessions. It is demanded that Yi should go to St. Petersburg. I send a letter with details of the arrangements. Inform Sou that the situation with regard to the I-khe-touan is very critical."

[LETTER.]

"MY SON,—

"You will here find the note concerning yesterday's negotiations between the Ou dignitary and the Viceroy. When you receive this letter I hope that all necessary measures will have been taken to prevent an eventual conflict with the Western Powers. I add, however, what follows :—

"The Viceroy is now very sure that Tsou-hsi can no longer restrain the actions of the I-khe-touan. He has not yet been able to discover how this movement came into being against the Ta-Tsing; but he is nearly convinced that Russian policy, by the intermediation of Yi, stimulated the priests of Fô to conspire against the dynasty. In any case, Russia is now, in his opinion, the only State which can and will get Tsou-hsi out of her difficulties. Very probably the dynasty intends to authorize the movement of the I-khe-touan against the foreigners in order thus to gain the sympathy of the people afresh. In this case Tsou-hsi will necessarily need help to resist the probable reprisals of the Western States.

"The Ou dignitary offers, in this case, Russian sympathy under the conditions enumerated in the enclosed report. The Viceroy has at last accepted, thinking that the dignity of the Middle Empire must be protected even by the abandonment of useless

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external territories. Mr. Kou will immediately receive instructions for the affairs of Ourga. All the measures to protect the dynasty will be taken, if necessary, in time and directly. The Viceroy only asks you to remit the enclosed note to Mr. Sou.

“For the rest, I hope that your activity may be useful to the dynasty and people. The way of Heaven is right. I think of your welfare.”

[REPORT.]

“The following are the results of the negotiations with Li. I affirm that they are in agreement with the wishes and anticipations of the ministers.

“In what concerns our obligations to the Bogdo-Khan we shall have in any case, and in the face of any possible eventuality, to guarantee the existence of the dynasty and the undisputed domination of Chinese territory properly so-called. Quite specially, we should oppose any further territorial concession, whether solicited by peaceful negotiations or demanded after an armed conflict. On the other hand, we should support the dynasty against any Western intervention and also against the I-khe-touan, if that became necessary. In the case in which the dynasty, in consequence of the revolt which seems inevitable, should find itself in a situation of embarrassment, we would help it, if necessary, by sending funds. That could be done by the channel of Ourga.

“In compensation we should dispose of the external provinces.

“In the first place, so far as Manchuria is concerned, the convention of 1896 as to the Russian-Chinese Bank will be officially prolonged for an indefinite period, so that the railway of Eastern China may be

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officially recognized as Russian property. If the situation demands it, we shall have power to occupy Manchuria with military force. But it will be prudent to leave the administration to Chinese officials under Russian control.

“As for the eventual organization of the country, it will be necessary to proceed to it in such a fashion as to obviate the suspicions of the Powers against China, and exclude any possibility of an armed conflict with Japan or the Western Powers. It will be useful in any case, if military garrisons prove indispensable, to employ Chinese troops as far as possible.

“The Government of the Bogdo-Khan will give up the payment of the taxes, but we shall have to administer the country at our own expense. The Bogdo-Khan will continue to quote the name of the three (Manchurian) provinces in the list of his possessions.

“We shall naturally have complete liberty in the matter of commercial or mining concessions, none having as yet been granted to any one.

“In the second place, as to what concerns Setsen-Khan and Touchet-Khan (Mongolia), we shall have the power, if we wish, to establish a protectorate there, but Li declines all responsibility, the Mongol Princes being constitutionally free to refuse if they please. Military operations would remain fruitless. The best would be to leave this matter to the care of G——, and to arrange it by means of the gold question. It will doubtless be necessary for this end to have Guiguen-Koutouktou on our side. We have power to construct the railway. The Khans will govern the tribes as before.

“As to what concerns Tian-chan-pe-lau, the Chi

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nese administration must be left in order to avoid enormous expense. The troops will be sent back, except for the requirements of the police service.

"There has been no question of the Dalaï-Lama. The details of our relations with him are unknown.

"In case of diplomatic difficulties, Li will be charged with the general management of affairs. He fears that the I-khe-touan business will produce more difficulties than we think.

"Under these conditions, it would be very useful to hasten the development of the affair with Touchet-Khan, and to consolidate the administration of the Manchurian line. Any responsibility on the subject of revolts or other possible difficulties in the countries in question in our negotiations is declined.

"This is only as a written report. As I do not know anything about the I-khe-touan, I think our mission is fulfilled. The execution of our stipulations will only become possible after something has happened at Peking.

"With us and at Peking they are informed in the time indicated."

It is unprofitable to comment on these writings or to compromise political and administrative personages, both Russian and Chinese, by trying to supply the translation of the names in monosyllables which occur in them. They are in truth only the serviceable and conclusive confirmation of the events which, since the rupture of Peking with the Dalaï-Lama, have been unfolded in the Far East, sheltered from indiscretions which would inevitably have been fatal had one of the treating Powers been implicated in them. Moreover, it is only the fact that it has

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been possible to keep the secret, that could make them appear improbable to the eyes of the Westerns. The truth, however, carries the appearance of the improbable gracefully. The documentary value of these notes, then, is purely symptomatic.

On the other hand, it would serve no purpose to refuse to recognize that the state of affairs, such as it stands out with so strange a definition from these writings, and such as it has made itself palpable to the observer on the spot, should make us contemplate the Chinese disturbances of 1900, and their immediate consequences to China and the West, from a point of view which differs considerably from that which the Western public has been forced to adopt on the faith of the information presented to it.

Everything which is connected with the dynastochlocratic revolution of Peking is found, in fact, to be reduced to a secondary episode in the summary of Russo-Chinese history which has just been set forth. Certainly this incident was a tragic one, and calculated to excite and confound the imagination of ill-informed men of the West. It is not for that reason deprived of the absurdity which attaches to uselessly sanguinary Quixotic fights. The Governments of the so-called civilized States, by considering this lamentable episode as an historical epic in the first rank, have given the measure of their diplomatic incapacity, and of the barbarity of the methods which claim to be civilizing. With the system of forces which had quite naturally resulted from the reciprocal Russian, Thibetan, Manchu, and Chinese activities, the revolution at Peking had become an absurdity which each of these four occult powers had an interest in preventing. And it is a piece of historic irony

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really worthy of meditation, that at the exact moment when this cataclysm, foreseen and discounted, became useless, it also became inevitable.

It was, as we know, the recriminations of the West against the dynasty, powerless to control the movement, that occasioned the military events of 1900. The history of this campaign, and of the negotiations which accompanied it, have been related, so far as they concern the West, so many times, that it would be tedious, if not useless, to recapitulate them in a more objective manner. It is, however, indispensable to ask ourselves, what the influence of these events has been upon the general march of the Russo-Chinese enterprise ?

The answer is simple. The Boxer affair has been entirely in favour of Russia, and, in spite of appearances to the contrary, to the detriment of the Western Powers. From the point of view of the question of civilizing influence, it has only served to injure the prestige of the West, to make the Russian pseudo-civilization acceptable in China as that of the divine adversary to the diabolic Western civilization, and thus, through the hatred of the West and admiration for Russia, to prepare the formation of the Asiatic block which will one day be the fatal danger to Europe—the Russo-Chinese peril.

It must be admitted that this turn taken by the Chinese campaign is to be imputed to chance rather than to the diplomatic skill of the men who govern Russia. Combinations, in fact, seem easy to Russians, but administrative accuracy the most difficult of all things.

Having calculated fairly well the duration of time necessary for a concentration of troops in the Far

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East, the Russian Ministry of War began, as soon as the month of March, 1900, that is to say, two months before the first great disturbances in China, to mobilize the regiments which form part of the Siberian military areas. No assertion in the world based on the belated ukase for mobilization, dated on July 9, will cause the disappearance of this reality, so disagreeable to the Westerns; only, this partial mobilization, as rumours skilfully set in circulation said, was not directed against China, which did not even seem to be thought of, but against Japan, which furthermore explains the concentration of enormous forces in the Pacific province, and also denotes the firm determination of Russia to take her precautions, not against China, but against the rivals who might injure the prestige of Russia in China.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was less adroit or less fortunate than its colleague of war. The calculations of the time for the probable outbreak of the great revolts were proved to be erroneous. The disturbances broke out two months too soon for Russia. Nothing was ready. The treasury, which was in process of being refilled in consequence of an excellent piece of business, was still insufficiently fed. Given the unwholesome excitement which had taken possession of all Europe, and—a point which was still more disturbing to Russia—even of America and Japan, it was to be feared that an intervention on the part of the maritime Powers, better organized from the military point of view, might succeed in impressing the Chinese Court in such a manner as to render the execution of the convention of Canton impossible or to compel Russia to intervene openly against the Westerns in favour of China, a thing

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which might have entailed a universal war. If, on the other hand, Russia had been the first to intervene, and had rendered the mobilization of the military forces of the West superfluous, she would have been able from the very beginning to play the part of honest broker between the Chinese Court and wrathful Europe. The mistake of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Muravieff, seemed fatal and irremediable. On being violently rebuked by the Czar and his old enemy, Witte, the soul of the affair, the unfortunate statesman poisoned himself.

XXII

The Horrors of War attributed to the Germans. The Part of Baron Kettler. The "Huns." Chinese Documents. The Czar a new Messiah

IT was at this critical moment when the Russian plans seemed to be stranded *in extremis* that the happy chance presented itself, which was to change the embarrassed position of the Czar into a Messianic apotheosis. The German Ambassador at Peking, Baron Kettler, was executed by the people, an occurrence which roused the hypocritical and ill-founded indignation of Europe.

For this personage is reserved the posthumous glory of having ruined the policy of his own country, and consolidated the power of Russia in the Far East.

He was in the eyes of the Chinese the horrible incarnation of the malevolent spirit of the foreigners. The expedition undertaken, as was bound to be believed, to avenge the death of this man, could only appear as a perseverance in crime destined to discredit its authors and present those who did not press it as, by contrast, relatively sympathetic. For Kettler was only one of those men with a vulgar want of balance, who, forced to control their barbarous instincts in their ordinary European environment, give them a

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free rein, as soon as they are placed outside Western civilization and have no longer to fear the judgment of their fellow-citizens. Deducting the terrible ignominy (ten times more execrable than the murder of an ambassador in a foreign country), which consists in ordering the arrest of citizens in a foreign country, to have them put to death by his own authority on the inviolable soil of the embassy; deducting also the supreme clumsiness which necessarily characterizes an arrogant Prussian officer in relation with the shrewdest and most courteous diplomatists in the world, there were more general reasons for the execution of this man by the people. He took a ridiculous pride in insulting Chinese manners. He even drove this mania so far that his colleagues, and even missionaries, though but little suspected of kindly feeling to the Chinese, ended, after having given him discreet advice, by making him responsible for the sudden insurrection of the Peking populace. The popular grievance which led to his regrettable end deserves to be related.

The great Chinese officials, in order to pass easily through the streets, which are often overcrowded, are accompanied by a certain number of servants, who shout to the passers by, in consecrated formulas, that they must make way; at need they hustle the common folk a little; these lictors carry the truncheon. Kettler had imagined that he could simplify the procedure. He had himself accompanied by some soldiers who, not speaking Chinese, replaced the formulas by vigorous use of the truncheon. Persons who were eye-witnesses of these facts affirm that there were some twenty pedestrians severely bruised whenever Baron Kettler went out. On the day of

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danger, instead of remaining prudently at home like his colleagues, he insisted, in his mania for ostentation, on employing his usual habits ; but he had been abusing the patience of the crowd too long. This time it tore him in pieces.

What a happy piece of good fortune for Russia ! The people, or the Peking hired mob, had naturally thought in striking Kettler that they were attacking not the diplomatic and inviolable personage protected by extra-territoriality, but a hated enemy dangerous to the public safety. However, this quite accidental act of violence was represented to the Western public as the deliberate and official assassination of an ambassador, as an insult to the honour, not only of Germany, but of all the Powers represented at Peking, and united in the presence of a greedily coveted prey. The absurd national vanity, which is the dainty flower of European civilization, found an opportunity in this for a liberal display. Public opinion in Europe foamed with rage. Now, the Russian Government bethought itself of the Buddhist ideas respecting war.

It remembered that by the Chinese military power is considered contemptible ; it sows hate, they say, and reaps shame. The invader is assimilated to wild beasts, and the professional soldier, an assassin of his own choice, is reborn in the form of a carnivorous animal in another life. In short, Russia knew that the military expedition of Europe to China, which was apparently inevitable, would eradicate the last fragment of esteem which the Chinese had for Europeans. Russia then had only to force the responsibility for the imminent horrors of war upon another, in order to play the part of a moderator, and win love in proportion as the European invader would win

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detestation. And this other was to be precisely her only serious rival in Northern China. The murder of Baron Kettler was turning out to her greatest advantage, and already regret was felt at St. Petersburg for having imputed to the unskilfulness of that poor Muravieff a combination of circumstances which had brought on an incident so favourable to Russian plans.

Advertising noble fury, grotesquely posing as a new Attila, the German Emperor rushed into the trap. William II, Waldersee and their subalterns became the bugbear of the Chinese. This simple people, hardly knowing how to distinguish one of the Western nations in coalition from the others, could only impute all the horrors brought in the train of war to the one which was manifestly the inspiring and directing power in the military enterprises, viz. Germany.

It matters little whether this share or that in the ignominies perpetrated on peaceful populations by troops fired with the lust of blood is to be laid to the account of one or the other of the allied nations. Each is as good as the others. And the horrors of the slaughters and brigandage in China are probably no more monstrous than those which were seen when two hordes of white men, organized as what are called European Powers, cut one another's throats in the West. The peculiar horror which is inspired by the Chinese war is exclusively due to the dismal hypocrisy of Europe which denominates the brutal instincts of militarized crowds *patriotic virtue*, and the cowardice, which represents the orgy of murdering defenceless adversaries, *civilizing activity*.

Each fresh military exploit on the part of Europe

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was in its counter-stroke a success for Russian policy. Western military prejudice has long refused to recognize this, but the fact remains none the less true. If a proof is wanted, for that matter, and if a firm conviction is desired that this inglorious war has had as its one sole effect that of making the German, including the Western, detested, and of making the Russian beloved, precisely in the country where Russia is seeking a new Empire, it is sufficient to read the following letters. Never have documents been produced more deplorable for the shabby assumptions of Europe.

Private Letter sent from the Town of Chang-tzia-kau (Kalgan) on the 10th of December, 1900, to Mr. Ou-sse-kong, Agent of the House of Pao-tchouan-chang at the Maï-maï-tcheng of Ourga

RESPECTED FATHER-IN-LAW,—

For more than six months any postal communication across the Sea of Sand, which separates us, has been impossible, because, as you know, the barbarians of the Western Ocean have made a warlike invasion into the middle Empire. They have forced the Emperor to leave the Residence and they have overturned the Government; thus no administrative department has been able to continue its functions. Then they invaded the undefended country, murdering and pillaging. These hellish criminals declare that they are in peaceful negotiation with the Emperor, but at the same time they continue to torture the people in an unheard of fashion with terrible cruelty and devilish delight. In comparison with these greedy hordes of mad dogs, those missionaries were

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really still human, though they did provoke these misfortunes because their disgraceful trade was going badly. There is not one of these barbarians who has not deserved "the eight penalties" at once. They are not soldiers, like the Russian Tartars, they are brigands, ravagers, thieves, swindlers, murderers, executioners, butchers of old men and children, violators of women and girls, liars, torturers of slaves, in short, devilish Christians. I wanted to tell you that before communicating to you the awful news which you are going to read. But rage is better than despair.

No horror has been spared to this town and our house. And I have long asked myself if it would not be better that I should voluntarily extinguish my life. Respected father-in-law, may heaven protect you, and preserve your life and strength! I remain here alone of all my family. Your excellent daughter, my wife, was outraged almost before my eyes, by bestial hands, who then killed her and cut her open. Your bright grandson, my poor son, was killed with a shot from a revolver because he cried too much. And the baby, of whose birth I informed you in my last letter, had to shiver alone while I remained bound; he took cold and died afterwards. Your excellent daughter, my wife's sister, was, in the same way, outraged in her house, but she escaped death, as did her children. Her husband is in danger, for he has been dragged by the barbarians to the Residence, and kept as waggon-driver for the booty. As for myself, I was cruelly maltreated, because I opposed the plunder of the silk-shop; I had already taken nearly all the silver that I possessed to the prefect. I do not know how it is that just I have been obliged to escape death, so many others having been murdered!

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The disaster has been no less to property than to life. This is how the pillage was done :—

Fugitives came from Hsiouen-hoa saying that the barbarians were advancing, robbing and murdering. One part of the inhabitants took refuge with the prefect, the others shut themselves up in their houses. Soon the barbarians came. It was said at the Residence that they were Pous (Prussians or Germans). The prefect made no opposition. The commander of the barbarians, a man much too young, wearing hair on his face, and whose face was imprinted with arrogance and mocking cruelty, had the house of the prefect shown him, and entered without announcing himself. The soldiers spread into the streets in groups, and penetrated the houses which seemed to them rich. Whoever tried to oppose them was killed with revolvers or the sabre. Nowhere did they respect the threshold of the inner habitation. All the servants and other employees, who could, fled. Often something was shouted to them, and when they did not come back, they were fired on.

Our quarter was the last invaded, but it was impossible to leave the town without falling into the hands of the soldiers.

The commander had demanded twenty thousand ounces of silver from the prefect. The safe was empty. Then he was threatened, he and all the rich people, with death and complete pillage. The prefect sent to all the men of business for silver ; in mortal terror they all gave it. I gave 250 ounces of the 350 which I had in the safe. Soon the prefect had received more than twenty thousand ; but the commander of the barbarians pocketed all. We were calmer, we thought we were freed by the gift of money. Fatal mistake !

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Thousands of soldiers had not as yet their share. They found spirit-shops which they plundered. Soon many of them were completely drunk. They went into all the houses. One was obliged to show where there was merchandise or precious objects, otherwise one was maltreated in a horrible way. A great number of people who opposed the plundering were killed in their own houses. All objects of value were carried into the street. The men were strangled.

The husband of your daughter, my wife's sister, tried to defend the entrance to the interior apartments against these devils ; he was beaten with rifles and fastened to a beam. Four of these dogs went in. The women-servants tried to escape, but were seized in the court by eight other brigands, who outraged them with laughter. Your daughter, in her terror, seems happily to have lost consciousness quickly ; she was found later in a faint, manifestly in consequence of hideous outrage. In my house it was much worse still. They came in, I was flung down and choked. Everything was plundered. I was furious, for I had already given my silver.

" I have paid ! I have paid ! " I cried in English. " You have no right to take this ! "

One of the robbers understood me, and said something to me with a frightful grin. I understood that they had their Emperor's orders to murder everybody and rob everything. I was writhing in my cords while five brigands went into the inner rooms. I heard the screams of women and frightful laughter. In desperation I called my wife. She replied, shouting for help, and I could not free myself. I shouted : " Your Emperor is a mean brigand, a murderer, a dirty outrager of women, a stinking pig ! "

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There was a shot. My wife uttered a horrible scream. I lost consciousness.

When I came to myself, it was dark. I cried "Help!" Mr. Ou heard me; he came with a lamp. He untied me. The murderers were gone. But, horror! in the inner apartment lay my wife dead, disembowelled after horrible outrages, my son, his skull broken, and the two women-servants killed with the sword, they, too, outraged, and the baby ill. I could not weep. I was mad with rage. I shouted revenge. Never have innocent creatures been so horribly tortured.

Mr. Ou took me away and hid me in his shop, now empty. There I fell ill. But I took a vow to torture and kill slowly as many of these barbarians as I could. And as for me there is no possibility of doing so. I implored heaven to send a noble man on to the earth to strike down the Emperor of these barbarians like a mischievous beast—it would be justice—and hurl him into hell, so that he may be judged by the supreme judge.

For the rest all my property is lost. The brigands loaded 230 carts with all the things stolen, and the victims of the robbery have been themselves obliged to drive the carts to the Residence. My brother-in-law, too, has been taken off in this way.

More than a thousand murders were committed. Why does Heaven allow it?

As for your honourable son, I do not know where he is, nor even if he is still alive. After having beaten the money-lending missionary of Pao-ting, as he swore to do, he ran away. This summer he was at Tai-yuan. Since the Emperor went to Tai-yuan, and then to Hsi-ngan, I have had no more news of him.

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But, my respected father, permit me to wish for you, that you may have patience and strength of mind. The law of Heaven guides all.

In five days, by the next post, I will send you further news. May they be better !

I pray for your welfare.

TSIEN-LAO-KONG.

Private Letter sent from the Town of Tchang-tzia-kau (Kalgan) on the 15th of December, 1900, to Mr. Ou-sse-kong, Agent of the House of Pao-tchouan-chang at the Maï-maï-tcheng of Ourga

RESPECTED FATHER-IN-LAW,—

I have sacrificed to the ancestors of your sublime daughter, my wife, the victim of murder, in order that they may avenge the horrors perpetrated on your family, and give you the strength to bear your grief. Our family is destroyed, the family hearth extinguished for ever, and of the four social relations, there exist for me now only two. Why all this evil ?

However, what has been spared of our family is better. Your excellent daughter, my wife's sister, was ill with shame and grief. She would perhaps have made an attempt upon her life, if the servants and her maternal affection had not withheld her. Our anxiety on the subject of her husband, who had been taken to the Residence, was happily ill-founded. He came back yesterday evening, but without his horses and carriages, which the barbarians took from him. He has in truth escaped death solely because his destiny willed it so. Both his journey and what he saw at the Residence during one day have enlightened us as to the terrible fate which is smiting the Chinese people, and as to

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what is the ever memorable turpitude of the mean barbarians and their emperors.

The Ous (Russians) alone resemble human beings ; the Pous, who are in the largest numbers, behave themselves in an abominable manner ; nothing so atrocious is related in the annals of the Kin and Yuan Dynasties touching the invasion of the Tartars. And, then, the Chinese knew that they were at war, and could defend themselves, while, now, the Government says we are not to stir, but to be murdered lying down. All the Chinese, whom the Pous find outside the Residence, are killed.

My honoured brother-in-law could hardly eat anything during the whole journey to the Residence. He was much beaten, and the barbarians, real carnivorous animals, who do not even know how to eat as they should, employed him as a slave, and treated him, as no Chinese master would ever treat his servants. They did not even want to allow him to satisfy his natural needs, and when he was ill in the night, the soldiers who guarded the prisoners took his excrement and spread it over his face addressing him with abominable laughter. Some of his companions tried to escape ; they were shot.

At the Residence lamentable disorder reigns. The master of the town is the general of the Pous, a robber, a savage and mischievous beast, in the opinion of all, who by himself alone has done more harm than all the criminals detained in the state prisons. The whole population is in danger of death. Never has a more complete anarchy existed since the beginning of the Empire.

With the contents of the two hundred and thirty carts of stolen things they made a big auction in the

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square of the Residence. My brother-in-law, having lost all, could take no part in it. The whole was bought by base barbarian officers and merchants. Three pieces of embroidered silk which belonged to him, and which he had wanted to sell for thirty ounces each, were bought by a priest for a bottle of brandy ! The two bronze dragons of inestimable value, which came to him from his ancestors of the fourth generation and used to adorn the inner room, were bought by a Ying (English) officer for two bottles of champagne. And so on. A worse trade than that of the missionaries !

At the Residence the Imperial Palace has been profaned, the ambassadors and their wives even have stolen the inestimable objects of art from the interior apartments. These base despisers of the sciences have partly burned the great library ; and, like dogs over a bone, they fought among themselves, it is said, for the famous instruments of the Imperial Observatory.

When my brother-in-law wished to return here the inhabitants told him to stay, for in the town his life was nearly safe, but in the country he would certainly have been taken and killed. The general of the barbarians, an infernal ruffian who is called Oua-ta-sze, ordered his Pous, greedy for blood, to take all the Chinese, to make battues to catch them, and to kill them like rebels. He is cruel to such a degree that the Ous show their horror at it ; and if it be true, as they say, that the Emperor of the Ous wishes to protect the Chinese, and that the Cossacks will come here by the Sea of Sand to deliver us from the brigands, may Heaven grant him the happiness of exterminating these devilish Pous ! He will be blessed by all the Chinese.

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The Pous, indeed, have been beating up the country for the last two or three days, as though for a stag hunt, and have been taking all whom they find ; when they have two or three hundred they take them to the banks of the Hon-ho. There they put them in a line with their backs to the water. Then at some distance they form another line, and then they rush with fixed bayonets upon the victims, who perish either pierced or flung into the water ; those who throw themselves into the water to save themselves by swimming serve as targets for the guns of these cowardly murderers.

Not only do the Chinese tell this story but also the Ous. My honoured brother-in-law happily met an Ou officer, whom he ventured to address, using the language of the Maï-maï-tcheng. He told him his misfortune, and asked him what he could do in order to return home.

The officer seemed indignant at the disgraceful acts of the Pous ; and he told him that the chief of the plunderers of our town was dead. We all thanked Heaven for having exterminated that venomous toad. The officer made him wait at the door of the Imperial Palace ; for everybody now enters the Imperial City. And coming out, the officer gave him a paper, which made him driver of a tea-cart for our town, and added two ounces of silver for the journey ; for it is, alas, necessary to take provisions as if one were crossing the desert. The transport of tea arrived here safely ; it was in great part the same tea which had been stolen here, which had been sold for nothing at the auction, and which we have been obliged to buy back dear. Thus one is robbed twice over.

When shall we see the end of all these disasters ?

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When will the cut-throat Emperor be smitten by heaven as the plunderer of our town ?

Of my own affairs I have no wish to say anything more. But be glad, that of your excellent daughters one at least is saved with all her family. For to be dishonoured by beastly force—could that be any more dishonourable than to be bitten by a mad dog ? It is a misfortune, not a disgrace. May heaven give you tranquillity of soul !

I am raising an altar to the sublime memory of your virtuous daughter, my wife, murdered for her virtue. And I pray for our revenge, and your welfare.

TSIEN-LAO-KONG.

Private Letter sent from Tching-ting, on the 19th of December, 1900, to Mr. I-tsai-ming at Erdeni-Tsiou

MY HONOURED ELDER BROTHER,—

Heaven be praised ! You do not dwell in these disturbed times inside the Great Wall. For our misfortunes are extreme. I am writing you this letter so that you may know where you will have to send the courier who has to do with the affair of the Ko-loun Society, and I write in haste. Communication with the central Board is impossible. Since my last letter the country has undergone the invasion of the Trans-Oceanians, who have conducted themselves (alas ! the nomad and brutal peoples who fall upon our peaceful nation have always shown the same character) almost more odiously than those Mongols of whom the annals of the Ming Dynasty speak.

For these Trans-Oceanians are not content with mere killing and plundering, but they come like

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friends, and, everything once arranged, they no longer take any account of the engagements into which they have just entered and commit the worst outrages of humanity.

So, as you see, I am at Tching-ting, and am staying with our business friend, Ou-ting-yuan. That means to say that Pao-ting was plundered by the Pous and that I had to fly. Of my property I have been able to carry away only a very little. For, as being a fervent servant of Fô, I had allowed myself to be admitted to the Society of the Big-Fists, and I had taken an oath on the six syllables, and as the Trans-Oceanians are everywhere killing or torturing the Big-Fists, I was obliged to clear out with all speed.

And it is truly fortunate that my marriage with Miss Tchou, of the Golden Lily, has not yet taken place. The shop-stock belonging to the Society, I have then neither loss of beloved beings, nor loss of fortune to lament. My flight from Pao-ting was caused by the following events.

The Trans-Oceanians arrived one evening in front of the town. These were those who are called Fats (French) and are distinguished by three vertical bands of different colours. Their general sent his card to the prefect, and certainly added reassuring observations. In short, orders were given to open the gates of the town.

The Fats entered and occupied the houses of the East Street, where they installed themselves; they asked for food and the rest. They were given what they asked for. And they committed hardly any misdeeds. The prefect had to pay a pretty heavy contribution. And the Fats hoisted their flag over the gates of the town. No harm was done to anybody.

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And the prefect put up a proclamation saying that nobody had anything to fear either for his life or his goods. The Fat general had given him guarantees. But see how all that turned into disaster.

The Fats had arrived for three days, when up came an immense troop of other Trans-Oceanians. These were the terrible Pous, whose bloodthirsty Emperor, who, it appears, commands the Fats also, is savagely exterminating the Han people.

There was a panic at first ; above all when it was seen that these Pous had ravaged the whole country traversed by them, destroyed the harvest, burned the towns, and killed everybody. There was, they say, at the North Gate a violent altercation between the Pou general and the Fat general, and the Fat soldiers prepared to fight the Pous. But the Pous are the masters of the Fats, unfortunately. The Pou general sent one of his interpreters to the prefect, and the latter immediately sent a crier through the streets to say that all those, and above all the Big-Fists, who for one reason or another had to fear the Pous, must clear out, the town passing into the hands of the Pous.

The flight was terrible. But at last I am in safety. If I had lived in the Middle Street, I should have been lost. The filthy Pous, taking no account of the promise of the Fats, plundered and burned our great town. They murdered the prefect and two hundred merchants in order to get their money. This is all that I know of it up to the present. Nobody ventures to stir, and I shall stay here as long as possible.

What a piece of good fortune that you are where you are out of reach of the mortifications ! For we know that the Cossacks protect you. If, quickly too, they would only advance, fling these hellish Pous into the

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sea and restore order ! Business is naturally completely stopped.

However, everything comes from Heaven, everything returns to Heaven. Write to me soon, you will give me pleasure, I wish you welfare and success.

I am your very little and stupid younger brother.

Letter from Mr. T——, high official of the Hou-pou (Ministry of Finance) to Mr. S——, Secretary at Ourga

I am very glad, my venerable uncle, that you are at the Maï-maï-tcheng of the north, that you are there under the safe protection of the Ous. You find yourself there already in a situation which we, less favoured, can only hope for. The news concerning the devastations occasioned by the Pous, in spite of the course of negotiations for peace, are frightful.

The Government cannot protect the life of the inhabitants of the country. My venerable former teacher, Mr. Ou, member of the Han-lin (academician) and member of the Court of Appeal, has, however, told me that the Government at last counts upon the effective assistance of the Emperor of the Ous, who is now in profound antagonism with the criminal Emperor of the Pous, who causes extraordinary cruelties to be perpetrated upon entire populations, which did not even know of his existence.

But you must be better informed of the march of Russian action than I am, and at this moment you have perhaps already seen the Russian Tartars advancing towards the south to deliver this country from the Trans-Oceanian invaders to the profit of all.

It is hoped that perhaps the Pou general will be

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imprudent enough to enrage the Emperor of the Ous by occupying territories which the Emperor of the Ous cannot allow to pass into the hands of a rival ; or that in some other fashion the inevitable conflict between Pous and Ous will be precipitated. For the Ous are the friends of the Hans.

It is to be wished that the money affair may be very soon settled, and I am writing this letter to you above all so that you may impress upon Oross-Amban (the Russian Consul at Ourga) the absolute necessity of doubling the supply. We are in difficulties because it is impossible to get in the taxes necessary to meet our needs.

(Signed) T——.

The path of power is muddy with blood, and from the point of view of history it would seem superfluous, if not useless, to insist upon the overwhelming proofs of brutal barbarity which these documents produce against peoples which call themselves Christian and civilized. For the rest, whether the facts quoted were impartially observed or not (considering the origin of the documents we can hardly doubt it), the essential thing is the state of mind which stands out from them, the complete distinction established between the evil-doer of the west, and the Russian, the protector, the deliverer.

This condition of mind, in the provinces in which Russia is most interested, is the surest guarantee for the final success of her economic plans. It is also, in the inevitable complications of the future, the fatal danger to the Westerns. The whole anxiety of Russia must have served to maintain it.

During the occupation of Peking, where the Westerns made themselves detested, with or without justice,

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the Russian Government distributed almost under the eyes of its blind rivals twenty thousand rations of rice a-day to the necessitous. Large quantities of sheep-skin cloaks and other clothes, generously lavished, made the Czar appear as a saviour.

And the triumphant arrival of the first trans-Mongolian courier at Peking in February, 1901, was so significant, that it was thought useful to send from Peking a telegram of congratulation, speaking of the love which the Chinese people felt for the Russians.

And while the Westerns played their concert absurdly, like bailiffs in a house where there is nothing to seize, to achieve diplomatic notes, Russia was conquering, in conformity with the convention of Canton, and was organizing into new provinces or protectorates the immense countries of Mongolia, Manchuria, and Thibet.

XXIII

The Annexation of Manchuria. Russo-Chinese Friendship. History and Destruction of the Khon Khous. The Drownings at Blago-vestchensk. Russia's Fiscal Organization of Manchuria. The Russian Colonists

ONE simple fact shows the manner in which the stipulations of the Canton Convention were conformed with. In the whole of Manchuria, as well as Mongolia, for that matter, there was full knowledge of events which had not as yet shown themselves; and, what is more, the information was official.

Thus, to give only one example, in the month of July, 1900, a high Chinese official in Mongolia was prepared to discuss in all their details the reasons which had induced the Government to cause the occupation of Peking by the *Russians*; and the circular from which this man had drawn this information, amazing, above all, in a country where nothing was known of the events which were being developed in Tchi-li, contained a number of edifying directions as to the situation of the northern provinces in the face of Russia.

When at length the situation at Peking was sufficiently entangled to excuse the adoption of military

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measures ; when, in other words, it became possible to occupy before the eyes of all Europe the countries which Russia had already the right to consider her own, a proclamation was drawn up, of which a very large number of copies were distributed throughout Manchuria and Mongolia.

This very important manifesto contained in its Chinese version (the only one which it has been possible to find) the following paragraphs :—

MANIFESTO

“ Governor-General Grodekoff publishes and proclaims a manifesto of the following tenor :—

“ The old tradition of unchangeable friendship between the Czar and the Hoang-ti exists as vigorous as ever. The minds of some of our subjects have been troubled in consequence of a revolt in China. The brotherly friendship between the Russian and Chinese Lords having never been so close as at present, and the Chinese Dynasty, finding itself in a situation of embarrassment, the Czar, continuing the ancient friendly traditions which enjoin upon him to offer his assistance, is coming to aid the Chinese Government in the restoration of order, and with this aim puts troops at its disposal.

“ There exists then no state of war. The subjects of the two States ought in consequence to observe relations as friendly as those of their Governments. Quarrels and insults between them will then be severely punished. Every obstacle to peaceable trade, save in so far as the Russian troops are concerned, will be considered brigandage. It is to be hoped that thus the allied Governments will in a short time restore absolute calm.”

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The excellent, even decisive impression, which this manifesto had made upon the population was unfortunately counterbalanced three weeks later by the news of the horrible drownings of Blago-vestchensk. This criminal deed, which was in reality to offer Russia the pretext for occupying Manchuria, was at bottom a fatal misunderstanding on the part of General Gribski, Governor of the Amour district, under the superior orders of Governor-General Grodekoff. The real difficulty for the Russian Government at this moment was to find a convincing reason to make Europe accept its military intervention in Manchuria. Now the embarrassing truth was that in spite of all the official telegrams and assertions the profoundest peace did not cease to reign in the very quarters in which Russia needed war.

The revolt of the I-khe-touan, which was overwhelming Tchi-li at this time was decidedly not extending to Manchuria. It was necessary then to create at least the appearance of its extension at any cost. There had never been militant I-khe-touan in Manchuria, and since the Sino-Japanese war the Chinese regular troops were distinguished by their absence. Happily for Russia there was the possibility of finding none the less an enemy to attack the Empire, who could easily be made pass for a Chinese or a Boxer in Europe.

This curious enemy is interesting not only by the fact of having rendered it possible to put the Canton Convention in execution, but, further, by certain sociological phenomena of which he offers a unique spectacle. The enemy was the Khon Khous (Chinese Khong-Khou-tse) brigands.

These Khon Khous were former workers of the

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gold mines which the Chinese Government exploited in Northern Manchuria. In the administration of these mines complications had occurred of which the existence and history of the Khon Khous was a consequence as unsuspected as it was grave in its development. This story is too typical not to be related.

The nature of the country in which the Manchurian auriferous deposits occurred demanded a special organization for the mines, which, for that matter, was very skilfully instituted by the Chinese Government.

Very good measures on the part of the Government assured in the first place the existence of the workers : the Russians adopted them when they had founded the Siberian mines. Depôts of provisions of clothing were established, ways of communication were created, barracks were built, the general plan of the works was drawn up, and, lastly, miners were sought. The pay was relatively high for China, nearly twopence a day, the State furnishing tools in addition to board and lodging.

But all this was too little to discount the climate and the country, too similar to those of the Far North. In winter the cold eliminates all humidity from the atmosphere, and makes of it a mist of ice-needles, which oppresses the chest and causes terrible pulmonary haemorrhage. Crows and goat-suckers often fall dead from the cold. For entire days and weeks it is necessary to remain shut up within doors, a torment to the Chinese who loves cleanness. In summer neither clouds nor rains give protection from the implacable sun; millions of mosquitoes make it impossible to lift the veil which shields the face even for a second.

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Add the difficulties of the work, the distance, the absence of news. The hiring became more and more difficult, and in the end it was necessary to be contented with the dregs of the people. From this the Government came to deporting convicts to the mines.

The miners, shady workmen, ill-paid and ill-kept, deported without wages, thought—as every wage-earner thinks who is underpaid and handles precious objects—that the engineers and the foremen, young for the most part, were no good for anything. But instead of revolting they deserted. The mountain country was uninhabited, the forest, *taïga* in Siberia, impracticable.

The terrible gold law could be avoided. Tens of thousands of workmen and convicts began to extract gold on their own account, and the Russian and Chinese traders carried on a clandestine commerce.

Powerless against the deserters, but unwilling to give up the produce of the mines, the Government continued none the less to send vagrants or malefactors, who imitated their predecessors, so that this desert became filled with a population of outlaws. These gold-seekers were for the fact of desertion punished severely, and subject to the capital penalty on account of their industry.

This existence of hundreds and thousands of proscribed men inside the State, even in a desert, was so much the more unexampled in China because the social instincts, strengthened by tens of centuries of social life, have rendered the very conception of an individual life impossible there. Logically, the Khon Khous had no sooner deserted than they thought of creating afresh new social units. It is remarkable that this amorphous mass of criminals, an aggregate

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of anti-social instincts, organized itself into numerous but very stable, federated republics. Towards 1870 this phenomenon occurred in several places at once.

One single organization which would have absorbed all the Khon Khous was unrealizable from the first. The territory of Manchuria is nearly double that of France. The different districts in which the proscribed were established were sometimes more than five hundred miles apart, and separated by the cultivated and populous provinces of the centre and south-east. Moreover there no longer existed any community of interest between them which could have united them all.

The number of the newcomers increased. Meanwhile all the auriferous valleys had been occupied. The population was larger than the supply of gold demanded. Tens of thousands of individuals found themselves without resources, proscribed, exposed to the rigours of an atrocious climate, and hardly supplied with the implements for even the most primitive form of hunting.

Europeans in a similar case would have killed one another. But this truth, that an organized group is required to triumph over the poverty of the individual, barely recognized in the West, is so ancient for the Chinese that, become again an unconscious instinct, it guided these men in a marvellous manner. With surprising facility and rapidity these criminals who had come to the bottom of the social ladder, but were incapable of betraying the incomparable splendour of their national genius, organized themselves in groups. With the unconsciousness perhaps of the plant which turns to the sun, they adapted

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themselves to the conditions of existence presented to them by their environment.

Those who were not established at the time of the crisis were the first to organize themselves. At first they contracted defensive alliances against the new miners. These alliances, comprising more and more adherents, became federations, which had no limit except the sphere of common interests. Then these defensive federations, united by the need of protecting the lives and goods of all in common, formed themselves straight off into co-operative societies of production, on the model of what takes place in China, with this difference, that over and above common production the group had further to create in common all that the State provides for, and make up for the absence of the State. The co-operative society, reduced to its own resources, soon became from productive or economic co-operative, a social co-operative, and lastly a regular communist republic, with its legislative, administrative and executive organs.

An analogous evolution took place even among those who no longer found auriferous deposits to exploit.

A truly astounding fact is that the fatal antagonism between the two groups of groups never brought on an open contest, even at the beginning. Nothing is more wholesome nor more admirable than the logical vigour of mind of these criminals—degenerates, in the words of a simplifying theory, who, in their period of implacable alternatives, reflected.

Both one and the other indeed were proscribed. The ordinary moral considerations, good and evil, right and wrong, had necessarily lost their virtue among individuals reduced to isolation.

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Logic alone possessed authority. What gave it power to overcome the inspirations of force is that nobody could discount an entirely favourable result.

We have here a verification of the hypothesis put forward by Nietzsche that right in itself is only a compromise between individuals or groups of individuals of sensibly equal strength.

In the present example the compromise was not even, as Nietzsche supposed, tacit. Verbal engagements being absolute for the Chinese, these compromises formed an implicit code, and, an admirable thing, from the beginning the group constituted itself, so to speak naturally, into a tribunal to judge and punish the crime of breach of word. At one stroke the manner of doing and living of these men, whom one might assume to be anti-social and on a level with the cannibals of Fiji, brings us back to the system dear to Jean-Jacques.

But there is something better. Over and above this more or less tacit social contract, there was also one in activity between groups. There were veritable conferences between delegates of groups of gold-seekers already established, and groups of newcomers.

The relations between these groups were discussed before being fixed.

It is sure that fear on the one side, and economic conditions on the other, did the whole. But it is to be remarked that the unhappy individual of the socialists is not to be found there; the man who claims to leave one social order to enter another which he believes to be better. We have to do with a vigorous individual, who boldly affronts society, and liberates himself therefrom, in the true sense of the word, and then afterwards effaces himself to become again of set

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purpose the wheel in a machine which goes of itself.

Finding themselves definitely outside the Chinese social order, but prevented by over-population from living in tranquillity, the Khon Khous constituted themselves, following a logical necessity, which is in the end amusing, as enemies of that order and formed an organization of brigands.

The history of these curious social evolutions is not merely a belated interpretation of facts whose verification is impossible. There still exist individuals who have been present at the assemblies in which these astonishing rights of the proscribed were formulated. Furthermore, we can still find sure information touching the following congresses in which the delegates of several bands of Khon Khous met one another.

The organization in the different groups must doubtless have varied with the local conditions. However, two principles were adopted everywhere and rigorously applied : community of the means of production and produce ; and the election of the directors by universal suffrage among the brigands as among the gold-seekers. The life of these latter being more regular, their organization is better known. The most celebrated among these groups, whose life for ten years was as peaceful as it was criminal in the eyes of the Government, is the republic founded on the Jeltouga, an affluent of the Amour in the extreme north of Manchuria.

This republic, sprung from the void, is found to have instituted an experiment in collectivism of such a broad flight that the socialists of Europe, even by emigrating and in defiance of more or less scientific theories, have never been able to realize its like.

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Its relative prosperity, the surprising development of its economic life, and that without any outside support, under a climate reputed murderous, in a barren country, bear witness at once to the marvellous genius, unknown as yet in the West, with which even the least cultivated Chinese are endowed for organizing themselves and obeyed the organization freely agreed upon. But the simplicity of its legislation, above all, the good working of its administrative services, and, what was most interesting, the administration of the common property, seem to prove that within a restricted circle we can realize by means of communism with the minimum of definite laws and official organs the maximum of intensity of production and of security in private relations. But it is true that for this there is required, as a prime necessity, strictly maintained respect for the principles of solidarity, honesty and dignity, which supply in China an essential foundation for economic relations, and for the observation of which barbarous and unconscious Europe is unhappily not ripe.

The people, to its own good fortune, never went beyond the number of 25,000 heads. It named by universal suffrage and by a kind of list ballot a legislative corporation of thirty members. The latter, far from discussing texts, when it had adopted certain general principles of right, did no more than control the executive committee appointed by the parliament, and comprising two presidents, two judges, a master of provisions, a master of production, and a master of sales.

The penal law applied by the judges after consultation with the district committees, fairly similar to our councils of "good and true men," was extremely

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severe. Was this the effect of the dread which was felt by these former insurgents, rebels against all society, of relapsing into crime? In any case murder was punished with death, theft with death, aggression with corporal punishment, revolt against the constitution with immediate exclusion, necessarily entailing death. Theft was the most serious crime; indeed it signified the negation of the organization itself. The means of production, like the produce, being the property of all, theft was logically impossible, and the apparition of this bid for private property caused the suppression pure and simple of the renegade under the heading of a measure of collective protection.

Furthermore, collectivism was almost a necessity owing to the nature of the country. The individual could not exist on producing or consuming by himself. The barrenness of the soil and the difficulty of the communications with productive districts did not permit an individual, above all a proscribed man, to procure his subsistence. The institution of a master of supplies was therefore necessary. He looked after horticulture, fishing and transport. Now it is marvellous to see on a soil from which the Russian can extract nothing, cauliflowers springing up, cucumbers, lettuces, and even hortensias. The technicalities of fishing do not seem to have yielded in anything to those of Europe. As for the caravans, they certainly travelled with more security than those of the Chinese tradesmen. All the merchandise was under shelter in official depôts.

The sale-master assumed the heavy task of passing the totality of the gold produced into China or Siberia. The skill with which he succeeded in achiev-

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ing this, and the influence which he came to exercise, have been seen at full play in certain scandalous criminal cases, in which the highest Russian functionaries were compromised, Siberian financiers, and even the Russian and Chinese Governments themselves.

The master of production superintended the work of the mines from the technical point of view. In the end he had introduced American processes. It seems, and this is a curious fact, that division of labour was brought about almost spontaneously.

The artisans went on with their trades and were employed by the foremen on the works appointed to them. The servants of the State charged with administrative work were elected by the committees of good and true men. All, from the presidents to the roughest of the miners, received the same pay in credit notes, and each could use it as he pleased, but without having power to lay it by for more than a year. Goods out of the ordinary run could not be bought except at the State Stores. The surplus profits remained in the State treasury and only equal shares were distributed in non-negotiable scrip. This measure was certainly provided for the case of the withdrawal of a citizen—a case which does not, however, seem to have occurred. Furthermore the premature and violent end of the republic did not allow the question of surplus receipts to be settled.

Women were in very small numbers. Free as the men, they lived with the man of their choice. They occupied themselves in gardening and fishing. Children were few. The rapid annihilation of the group prevented the formation of family law.

It is clear that the economic or primitive conditions of the proscribed of the Jeltouga proves little for or

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against the socialist theories of Europe. At least it is pleasing to observe a group of human beings of the lowest class create a brand new social happiness for themselves. From the scientific point of view the destruction of this centre of spontaneous socialist experiments is very much to be regretted.

The republic of the Jeltouga perished a victim to the measures of the Chinese Government for restoring order. From the very beginning of their organization the Government had been disturbed by the existence of these Khon Khous, and above all of those who, formed into republics of brigands, practised depredations upon the Chinese domains. The power of the brigand Khon Khous, thanks to their organization, similar to that which has been described, had grown in such a manner that, not content with occupying all the roads of Manchuria, they further came and levied heavy contributions in the capitals of the provinces. No journey could be taken except under their protection, and this was paid for according to a progressive tariff. Chinese generals and even governors submitted to this irregular tax, and brazenly exhibited a kind of military discharges which guaranteed them absolute security. However, the scandal in the end became such that the central Government took energetic military measures. None the less only a very few bands of brigands were destroyed, for they were too mobile to be caught. On the other hand, the fixed colonies were completely annihilated. The Russian Government guarded the Amoor, and prevented the flight of the communists. All were horribly massacred. The two Governments came to an understanding to prohibit the introduction of arms, established garrisons, and the situation of the brigands

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became more and more miserable. At the time of the Sino-Japanese war the Chinese regular troops evacuated the country, but it was the Cossacks who came to protect the building of the railway which was beginning.

The Khon Khous reached the north. Shut up in the sinister valleys of the Kheichan, tortured by cold and hunger, they awaited their death-agony there.

This tragedy was to take a farcical turn. The Russian Empire, on the point of absorbing Manchuria, wanted an enemy to make Europe believe in the existence of a war. It was then that the Khon Khous were thought of.

This miserable enemy, which could always be disposed of at pleasure by the expenditure of a few roubles, was to serve to save the world-wide policy of the Empire. Strong to the number of about two hundred, the Khon Khous, under the silent and conniving mouths of the Russian cannon, crossed the Amoor, the frontier of China, and pillaged two or three peasants' huts (Chinese for that matter) on Russian territory. It was this act of only moderate importance which was pompously styled 'Chinese attack upon Russia.'

The event took place on the 1st of July (Russian style) near Blago-vestchensk. This was the long-sought for opportunity for mobilizing officially the Siberian army which had been on a war footing since the 1st of March. It was at the same time the serious proof which could be relied on to convince Europe of the gravity of the situation for Russia, and give an excuse for the partial and discreet mobilization of the general Government of Warsaw, whether for good or ill. The effects of this mobilization soon

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made themselves felt in Siberia, where the arrival of enormous convoys of troops could be observed—absolutely useless if there had been no question of anything but the pretended Chinese danger.

Before the 182,000 men of this army were marshalled according to the plans of mobilization which the officers of the staff showed and explained in their delight at now being able to crush . . . Japan, Russian dignity was vigorously defended in the face of the Chinese invasion.

An official telegram, destined above all to show the West the masculine energy of the Czar, confronted with the distracting Yellow tides, was sent ostentatiously from St. Petersburg to Governor-General Grodekoff and Gribski, the general in command at Blago-vestchensk. This telegram said simply—

“Drive back the Chinese on the other side of the Amour.”

This diplomatic trumpet-blast was, however, taken literally by Gribski and his Cossacks, who only thought of murder and pillage. Gribski gave the order to drive off, not the Khon Khous, who had cleared out as soon as their enterprise was accomplished, but the whole peaceful Chinese population, which, among the half savage Russians of that country, is the only civilizing element, without which existence would be barely possible, the Chinese being the only farmers, gardeners, and artisans of the district. The Cossacks there plundered all the Chinese dwellings, stripped the miserable creatures, and literally drove them into the Amour, where 4,800 persons perished; the corpses fished up further down were basely searched and robbed.

Only the severe punishment of Gribski saved the

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Russo-Chinese alliance at this critical moment. He was cashiered forthwith.

The affair was considered so serious that at first it was thought it would be necessary to immolate the competence of Grodekoff to the wrath of China. He was indeed recalled, but he had hardly left his residence when a counter-order arrived announcing to him the despatch of a sword of honour: without Grodekoff, who was alone possessed of full information, the affair would have been wrecked. His successor, already appointed and tricked out with the title of Lieutenant-General, had to remain at his post of simple Governor of Transbaikalia; he had, however, a serious compensation in Mongolia before very long.

While the events at Peking stifled in Europe any interest which might have been brought to bear upon the Russian operations, Grodekoff crossed Manchuria peacefully. The few bands of Khon Khous survivors of the former splendour of the brigands furnished, willy-nilly, matter for innumerable victorious telegrams. The West hailed with satisfaction the news of this desperate and generous war. It was the time when all the snobs, all the journalists, and all the other timid imbeciles of the West were howling for vengeance. As a matter of fact, the Cossacks, most of whom were Buriats or Mongols by race and Buddhists by religion, were received by the population not as hated Europeans, but as brothers and friends, and very often as deliverers from the tyranny of the Khon Khous. In the beginning of the month of October, 1900, the work of occupation was completed in its broad lines.

General Grodekoff was justly able to celebrate this considerable result by organizing in the whole

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of his circle splendid and joyous reviews in which the officers read to the enthusiastic troops an order of the day containing thanks for having conquered for the Russian Empire the former Chinese province of Manchuria, the province of "the right bank of the Amour."

The cleaning up of this new but unavowed jewel in the crown of the Czars went on. The majority of the Khon Khous had retired towards the south. On the way they had had occasion to destroy in part the Trans-Manchurian line and its depôts of material. This misdeed deserved punishment. Its first effect, however, was the organization of numerous *Te Deums*, in which was breathed out the profound joy of the engineers, who had engaged the Khon Khous in their destructive action in order thus to be able to look on at the paralysis of the efforts of the Commission of Inquiry appointed in the month of May to certify and value the enormous frauds, which were the chief cause of the wealth of the railway constructors.

On the other hand, the friendly disposition of the population, which is entirely Chinese, could not but be increased in proportion as the Khon Khous and their tyranny disappeared. There were reasons enough for sending against the scattered remaining bands of brigands easy expeditions, which filled Europe with the military renown of General Grodekoff.

During this time more and more intimate relations were being developed between the Russians and the Chinese, and on both sides the sensation soon disappeared that was first felt in the presence of a pretended enemy in a foreign country. On the Russian side was ironically put forward the principle which at this time was worth to Russia all the sympathies of the Chinese under oppression from the Westerns

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in Tchi-li; they conformed to Chinese habits, and sought to establish among the people a state of mind favourable to the development of Russian influence, not by showing the Chinese the military superiority of the Russians, but their administrative superiority, which guaranteed calm and peaceful work better than the former rule.

The fact is that the Russian leaders know what the fatuity of the diplomatic bagmen of the West has never been able to understand, viz., that the manifestation of military superiority does not make the slightest impression upon the Chinese, and above all upon the Chinese Buddhist. Instead of creating respect or esteem the horrors of war bring upon the conqueror the stigma of moral inferiority, and therefore contempt. An army and war are in Chinese morality, and also in the popular sentiment, criminal and even bestial institutions. The soldier, and still more the officer, in their quality of professional murderers, will be changed into ferocious beasts in a further state of existence, and the bloodstained glory of a Waldersee, for example, excites contempt, as is easily certified, and among the most refined Chinese, at the outside, pity. This condition of mind, skilfully turned to account by Russia, has served in Manchuria, as indeed in China itself, to make the Russians appear so much the more the friends of the Chinese in proportion as the Westerns showed themselves their enemies.

The Russian Governors knew very well that the only force which impresses the Chinese is economic force. To ensure the peaceful possession of the country acquired by treaty and occupied without resistance, there were thus three essential necessities to be provided for : the destruction of the Khon Khous, the creation

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of a more extensive economic life by the introduction of Russian colonists, and the institution of a vigorous fiscal system in Asiatic Russia.

These three tasks, whose accomplishment had been prepared far in advance, were being fulfilled at a time when the European allies were still waging a war of hatred and vengeance, prejudicial to their own interests, against the innocent population of the coast provinces. Before the end of the year 1900 Manchuria was organized as a Russian dependency.

As far as the Khon Khous were concerned, they were removed without much trouble from the inhabited countries to be driven upon the Mongolian desert. It was, in fact, thought imprudent to annihilate them at once, their further existence being able, should the case arise, to serve as a pretext in the eyes of Europe for accomplishing fresh military exploits, which would account for the presence of Russian troops in this pseudo-Chinese country. Hardest necessity was bound periodically to attract these bands of brigands to the places guarded by the Russian troops, just as in winter wolves come up to the villages. Here was a source of periodic glory, which it would have been clumsy to cause to run dry at one stroke. But awaiting the complete pacification of Manchuria, which will be delayed as long as it shall be in the interests of Russia to let unsubjected elements remain there, it is important to certify that in all the places where a peaceful population exists, whether nomad, agricultural or industrial, every cause of disturbance has been rooted out since the end of the year 1900, and that since that time an extremely industrious and gentle people has been leading a peaceful life there without interruption.

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The Russian colonists began to establish themselves in the country from the month of November, 1900, on the vastest imaginable scale. There were, in fact, in the year 1900 about 30,000 Russian emigrants at Stretensk, the terminus of the Trans-Siberian on the Amoor, and the European Press never ceased talking of the extraordinary sufferings which these unfortunates had to endure. They were blocked at Stretensk, not only in consequence of the want of means of communication aggravated by a want of provisions, but also because the districts which they were to colonize were not as yet at their disposal. They were indeed not destined to remain in that barren country, where all their efforts would have remained vain; they were called to colonize the most important districts of Manchuria, and with this object they had been started from Russia as early as the month of April, an absolute proof that the Russian Government knew the issue of the Chinese disturbances before even any idea of their gravity was entertained in the West.

In the month of November, 1900, the colonists were transported from Stretensk to Kharbine in Manchuria, from whence they have been sent, little by little, to their gratuitous concessions, which are relatively considerable both in extent and value. Care has been taken to establish them, above all, along the course of the river Sungari, which is the real artery for the trade of the country. The localities inhabited by these pioneers of Russian civilization (which is, alas! always inferior to Chinese civilization) have received Russian names, and thus form a kernel in the heart of Manchuria, important for a future Russification.

The Russian Government now found itself faced with a serious difficulty. It was important to establish a

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fiscal organization in the country, which would convince the population of the pacific and final character of the occupation ; but it was to be feared that this creation of a civil administration would at last draw the attention of Europe to the true nature of Russian intentions. Russia, however, knew how to turn the difficulty skilfully by making use of the Russo-Chinese Bank. This hybrid institution is, as has already been established, the adroit and intangible agent of Russia for all purposes which are permissible to private individuals, but forbidden to States. From its foundation the Bank had organized a marvellous system of economic influence. Its numerous unavowed agents, its resources, no less enormous than mysterious, and the unheard of rapidity with which it assured its discount and transfer services, created for it in a very short time considerable influence and general sympathy. And among the Chinese, with whom economic organization takes the place at one and the same time of politics, patriotism and religion, the Bank could not fail to become a political agent of the highest importance.

The Russian fiscal system is characterized for the people, and especially for Asiatics, by the existence of *Kaznatcheistvo* or governmental treasuries, which are practically the symbol of Russian domination. These establishments receive the taxes, pay official salaries, and represent at the same time the Bank of the Empire and the Savings Bank. Its servants are naturally officials attached to the Ministry of Finance. Such government treasuries, which are for the Chinese the sign of a stable and pacific administration as opposed to the military organization, which seems peculiar to warlike invasions of short duration, were organized

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in Manchuria in the month of December, 1900. This was done in a very skilful manner. The staff of each agency of the Russo-Chinese Bank was simply augmented by a certain number of functionaries from the Ministry of Finance, so that each of these nominally private establishments could serve at the same time as a *Kaznatcheistvo*. A school of interpreters, which had already been in existence for five years at Ourga in Mongolia, unknown to everybody, had initiated young officials sufficiently in the secrets of the Mongol, Manchu and Chinese tongues. These latter took, with heavy salaries, the places in which there was contact with the population. Superior officials from the Department of Taxes, the Bank of the Empire, and the Savings Bank, Inspectors of Finances, who studied the introduction of Russian contributions, and geometricians, who proceeded to the establishment of a survey of the places peopled, completed the outline of this civil administration, improvised in a country twice as large as France, and whose conquest was still a profound mystery to the blind and arrogant diplomacy of the West. Soon Russian bills were the current coin. In case of disputes the procedure of the Russian justices of the peace, imported in haste, was preferred to the disorganized Chinese tribunals, and the customary taxes were paid to the agencies of the Bank instead of being handed over to the Mandarin.

Thus Manchuria was Russian. And very quickly the industrious Chinese became accustomed to the new arrangements. Often it has been possible to hear them say :—

“We Chinese have nearly always had foreign dynasties. A Russian Emperor, or a Manchu Emperor, it is the same thing, provided we are well off.”

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It may be fearlessly affirmed that a plébiscite in Manchuria to decide between the Czars and the Hoang-ti would declare clearly in favour of Russia. And this would be one proof to add to others, that military intervention is an absurdity in China. Russia has succeeded to the detriment of the West by a pacific policy, just where the maritime powers had ridiculously run aground in spite of, or because of, their military efforts.

This same truth stands out still more clearly, if that is possible, from the history of the annexation of Mongolia, prepared since the affair of the mining concessions, and authorized by China in the Convention of Canton.

XXIV

The Annexation of Mongolia. The Gold Concession as the Lever of Russian Action. The Kouriltai. The Defection of the Mongol Princes from the Manchu Dynasty. The Russian Occupation of Ourga. The Trans-Mongolian Railway. At the Pass of Hsi-Ouan-Tsze

AT the time of the Convention of Canton, which looked forward to a Russian protectorate over Mongolia, the high Russian officials, called in the missive quoted above Kou and Sou, had been warned of having to push the development of the situation by taking up again the business of the gold-mine concessions. This affair had, as has been shown, created a false position at once for the Manchu Dynasty, suzerain of the Mongol Khans, for the Khans themselves, and for the Russian Government, whose stalking-horse, the agent of the Russo-Chinese Bank, had procured these concessions in defiance of Mongol constitutional laws.

It has also been shown that the exploitation of these mines has been since the thirteenth century a State monopoly among the Buddhist peoples; that the gold law has never been cancelled; that Mongol jurisdiction depends exclusively on national tradition and the will of the Khans; and that consequently the

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Manchu Emperor has no right to grant concessions in Mongolia to foreigners. This right belonged solely to the Mongol Great Khans, and in the special case of the districts, in which the Tsings had by an abuse of power authorized the Bank to establish mines, to the supreme Khan of the Khalkas, Touchet-Khan, who resides at Ourga, the real Mongol Rome, where at the same time is resident the divine Vicar of the Dalaï-Lama, Bogdo-Guiguen-Koutouktou.

The Khan, the only personage of any importance in the question of the concessions, did not even know a word about them. The Chinese resident, called Manchu-Amban by the Mongols, who represented the Emperor, was no better informed. Bogdo-Guiguen, whose moral authority is enormous, had not yet been introduced to the secret. The only two persons at Ourga who were initiated were the nominal concessionary "Kou," and the Russian consul, Chichmarieff.

As soon as the moment for acting had come Kou proceeded with some arrogance, without even informing Touchet-Khan, to the organization of a gold-washing at a distance of less than 100 miles from the capital. Touchet-Khan hurled indignant protests.

The decisive moment for Russian policy was thus brought on. It depended upon the issue of this intrigue far more than could be believed. It was now a question of completing the stage necessary in view of the future domination of Northern China. It was necessary to find some means of detaching the Khans from the Manchu Dynasty, of winning them for Russian policy, and thus ensuring the supremacy over the country, the possession of the auriferous deposits, and of the great trade routes to Russia; this, too, in secret, without awakening the suspicions of Europe,

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and, above all, by peaceful processes. The task of juggling away in this fashion territories six times as big as France gave no signs of being an easy one. The question was not the same as that which came forward in the case of Manchuria. This latter country being the personal property of the Manchu Emperor could be ceded to the Czar by a simple act of resignation.

Mongolia, on the other hand, could not be transferred to Russia by the mere will of the Manchu Dynasty. In the event of the resignation of the Dynasty the Khans could form an independent community, and then Russia would have found herself quite unable to realize her other projects ; Mongolia would have formed a disastrous buffer between Russia and China ; it would have been, occasion arising, a formidable enemy in the flanks of Russian forces operating in the East ; it would have become ten times more formidable to Russia than the Transvaal to England.

Meanwhile, the business of the gold mines was so skilfully conducted by Kou and the consul, Chichmarieff, that within the space of a month the success of the great venture was assured.

Touchet-Khan, to begin with, forbade the establishment of the gold-washing, and declared his wish to base his action upon the old gold law. Kou then produced, to the immense amazement of the Khan, his concession from Peking, and continued triumphantly to erect his machines, which had been waiting for a long time at Kiakhtha on the frontier. The Khan, exasperated, immediately gave an order, which in Mongolia is very nearly equivalent to a sentence of death : he forbade his subjects to sell any kind of food or heating materials to the strangers and miners.

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The blows hit. The situation became critical.

Kou and the Consul solicited an audience from the Bogdo-Guiguen, whose orders are often better obeyed than those of the Khan; the spiritual dignitary received them amicably and accepted an offering of fifteen thousand roubles. It was then hoped that the Pope would cancel the orders of the King. When, however, he had had the offerings included in his treasure, he issued an edict yet more severe, if possible, than that of the Khan. Guiguen had not yet received instructions from Lhassa. Later on his attitude changed completely.

Kou complained officially to the Consul, and the latter, as had been agreed, applied to the Manchu-Amban, the Imperial commissioner. This high official, who had never received even the concisest instructions on the subject, took a long time merely to comprehend what it was all about; having, however, remarked the Imperial Seal put to the concession held by Kou, all he could do was to disapprove of the conduct of the Khan, and ask him to submit to the decision of the Court.

The latter, strong in his rights, supported moreover by a considerable force, refused point blank, and even had the wit to summon Manchu-Amban, by a cross-demand, to intervene in his favour as defender of the political *status quo* against the Russian interference. Manchu-Amban thus found himself in a more than absurd situation, which could only reveal his complete want of power. Furious at the negligence of his superiors, who had left him a prey to adversaries of whom he knew nothing, he resolved to abandon any interest whatever in the affair. In a very bad humour he gave the Khan notice that he had to arrange with the Russian Consul as he best knew how.

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To imagine an analogous case in Europe, it would be necessary to suppose that the Parisians complain to the prefect of a band of burglars, and that the prefect advises them to apply to the German Embassy.

By this decision of Manchu-Amban the Chinese Government virtually renounced suzerainty over Mongolia. And in the ridiculous contest between the three Ambans the mind of the Mongols was thrown into a very curious state of perplexity. Some of them even came to ask advice of the foreigners, addressing questions of the following nature to them :—

“ We have three Ambans, Manchu-Amban, Mongol-Amban (the Khan), and Oross-Amban (the Consul), who give, each on his own side, different instructions, and besides them Bogdo-Guiguen, who holds his tongue. Whom must we obey ? ”

“ Bogdo-Guiguen,” was the most judicious answer to give them.

In fact, the Pope withdrew his edict and waited.

The Khan could not do likewise, for his political interests were at stake. He then took the bold step for which Russia had certainly hoped. He put himself outside the sphere of authority of the Manchu Dynasty and convoked the Grand Kouriltai, the general assembly of the Mongol nobility, the court of last instance in all affairs of State.

The first sitting was extremely tumultuous. The assembly decided to mobilize the whole of the Mongol fighting forces with the object of defending the property of the Khans against the foreign assumptions. It was not said whether these were the assumptions of the Czar or of the Manchu Emperor.

In the presence of this critical situation Russia resolved at last to show her hand. M. Chichmarieff,

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whose name deserves to go down to posterity for the sleight of hand which he accomplished, thoroughly prepared for his huge task, applied to the Kouriltai, and undertook, in order to ward off great disasters, to explain the situation to this wildly excited assembly.

He explained to these nobles, naturally in their native tongue, how the complications of the present moment were the consequence, not of unfriendly conduct on the part of the Czar, but of perfidious conduct on the part of the Manchu Dynasty. The Czar had simply trusted the good faith of the Emperor. In the matter of the concessions, they, the Russians, were really not obliged to know all the details of Chinese legislation and Mongol State law. The Emperor had always caused himself to be considered the absolute lord of Mongolia ; and in face of that state of affairs the Bank had no power to do otherwise than apply to the Court of Peking for the gold concessions. The Czar in consequence had never had any intention of opposing the will of the Khans, or of despising it; on the contrary, he admitted that he was in the wrong, and he only insisted on the fact that the author responsible for the whole of this unhappy affair was not himself but the Emperor. This truth was a new proof, and one much to be regretted, of the deplorable want of consideration which the Manchu Court was in the habit of showing with reference to the Mongol Princes. But it must certainly be admitted that there was nothing amazing in this detestable manner of carrying on the political interests of the princes ; in fact, this was only the correlative of the disastrous economic relations which reigned between Mongolia and China. The usurious trade by which the Chinese dealers exploited the Mongols bore the same signs of selfish malevolence as

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the policy of the Chinese Government, which tended to defraud the princes of their possessions and their power. The intentions of the Czar were precisely the contrary of this nefarious policy. Just as Russo-Mongol commercial relations, based upon mutual confidence and the spirit of equity, had for their outcome to serve both the Russians and the Mongols, and as friendship was born of this intimate and peaceful commerce, so the Czar had not wished for anything in the establishment of gold mines, except to make the country, the people and the princes prosper by creating peaceful and profitable ties between the princes and himself. Chinese commerce had had this result in the end, that whole Mongol tribes, with all that they possessed, had been pawned to the Chinese as a guarantee for their debts. That was the end of Mongolia, economically and politically; and the lamentable decay was to be imputed to the disastrous negligence of the Manchu Suzerain. The Czar, on the contrary, wished to find for the princes a way out from the untenable situation. The Khans would, doubtless, be politicians enough to draw the conclusions which were imposed by this state of affairs. The opinion of the Czar was that the establishment of the gold mines could not bring any but splendid results for the Khans. The prosperity of the country would increase in proportions hitherto unknown; an intense and rich life would come to birth in the solitary places of the steppes where the bear and the panther now dwelt. But in order to bring about this new epoch, Russian co-operation was indispensable: the Khans could not exploit the mines, having neither engineers nor machinery. Over and above the mines, however, the greatest source of wealth for the Mongols would be,

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if the Khans consented to be the "nephews" of the Czar, the construction of the great railway from Kiakhta to Kalgan, for which the plans were ready, and could be shown to the Khans; this would one day render them the wealthy masters of the gigantic transit between the West and China.

This magisterial exposition was very plausible, if not absolutely in conformity with the truth. The economic side of the question, the only important side for Asiatics, had been set forth exceedingly well; any impartial criticism was impossible. The exasperation of the Khans against their Manchu Suzerain no longer knew any bounds. A hundred thousand roubles judiciously distributed among the princes under the heading of compensation did the rest. The Khans, enchanted at the same time by the wisdom of Oross-Amban and his liberality, went away to their homes content, not without having recalled the order for mobilization, and authorized on their own side the exploitation of the concessions unduly granted by the Court of Peking.

Practically all was over with Manchu domination in Mongolia, and also with the independence of the Khans with regard to Russia.

This immense diplomatic success, which is a master-stroke that no existing statesman outside the extra-parliamentary Russian diplomacy could have accomplished, took place at a time when the great Boxer disturbances were beginning to get talked about without, however, as yet disturbing beyond measure the somnolent representatives of the Powers at Peking. Was there any better information in the midst of the Mongolian desert than at Peking, on the subject of events which were happening, and were on the point of happening, in the

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northern provinces of China ? One thing is certain, viz., that a very curious panic suddenly terrorized the whole of the immense country, which separates Siberia from China properly so called. Whence came this agonized state of mind, which in the space of fifteen days changed all the conditions of life ? The trans-Mongolian telegraph from Kiakhta to Peking, entirely in the hands of the Russian and Chinese administrations, ceased to work, at least for private persons. Whence came then the sinister news of insurrections, revolts, revolutions and wars which were current among the Mongols, and, above all, among the numerous Russians established in Mongolia ?

The Russian Government, the creator of this disturbed state of mind, hastened to extract from it the consequences which it had foreseen. It took pains to purify the whole of Mongolia of all the elements which could in any case be suspected of maintaining distant relations, by which channel exact, but none the less indiscreet, news as to the situation of the country might have reached the rivals of Russia.

All foreigners, Russians and others, were advised to leave Mongolia, and transfer themselves to the other side of the Russian frontier. This was in appearance a measure suited to create faith in a solicitude which the Russian Government rarely displays for those whom it protects. Considering the imminent state of war, this solicitude was exaggerated to the degree of preventing travellers from advancing to the South, towards China, by cutting off their supplies of provisions and heating materials with the connivance of the Khan. Gradually all the Russians occupied in Mongolia arrived in Siberia, on the instances of the Russian Consuls,

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and profoundly convinced in consequence that terrible events were in preparation.

In truth, never had a more profound peace reigned in this country. And not a Mongol could ever make out what this extraordinary house-lifting meant. Lastly, a telegram, mysteriously hawked about by the Russian officials, brought the terrible news that the Chinese revolutionary army was approaching Kalgan sowing death and horror, and that there was a fear that it would invade Mongolia ; then the telegraph service was interrupted, so said the officials, and they certainly must have known.

Horrible uncertainty ! What was going on ? Would the Mongol people be swallowed up by the rising tide of blood ? And the army was not mobilized. Would the country at an early date be the theatre of a huge war of China against the Emperor of the North, as in the time of the divine Tchengis-Khan ? If this was the case, what must be done ?

The Russians were good-natured men, of agreeable communications ; the Buriats, brothers of the Mongols, were comfortable under their administration. The Russian soldiers were disciplined. If they were received as friends, there was no reason to fear from their side useless exactions or the horrors of war. The Chinese troops, on the contrary, and, above all, the revolutionaries, would plunder and murder everything : no worse misfortune than to find oneself in their path, even as friends, even as partisans. There was mortal anguish at Ourga.

Then Oross-Amban, generous and magnificent, offered the military protection of the Czar against the fabulous Chinese enemy, whom Russian diplomacy by force of insinuations had been able to pass off as a

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tangible reality. The offer was accepted with enthusiasm. Oross-Amban telegraphed from Ourga to Kiakhta, where, very judiciously, four sotnias of Buriat Cossacks had been consigned a month ago waiting for the opportunity which was revealed at present. These Cossacks, Buddhists in the majority, like the Mongols, speaking a language which the Mongols understand, made a glorious pacific raid of 250 miles. Three days after the despatch of the telegram they arrived at Ourga. This was, it seems, the 5th of May, 1900. The Mongols were astounded at their splendid paces and the rapidity of their journey. They were received as triumphant victors.

In fact, they were. Their arrival was indeed sufficient to dispel the rumours of a Chinese invasion.

The great cause was won without a doubt. The Mongol army did not exist, the Russian army occupied the Mongol capital, and peace had not been disturbed. Political and popular relations of great intimacy proved to be miraculously established. But there was still a great distance to be travelled from this point to the organization of the effective and profitable protectorate which the Russian Government was bound to try to establish. At this moment there were none but Mongol affairs to be guided. It was necessary, above all, to guide those of the Manchu Dynasty ; and for that purpose Mongolia was the most precious instrument, as the hidden channel of communication between the Czar and the Court, and also as the slips of the stage on which was played the tragi-comic drama of the Western expeditions.

Under these conditions the Russian Government was able, without fearing fatal indiscretions, to execute that part of the Convention of Canton which had to

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do with the Manchu Dynasty. It was, of course, impossible to exert any influence upon Western action by the Mongol channel, but the Court could be supported, which, entangled in its financial embarrassments, saw its authority weakening. The despatch of funds, provided for in the Convention, could now be carried out without any difficulty. In consequence immense quantities of silver in ingots were sent during the year 1900 and up to the month of March, 1901, from St. Petersburg to China, through Kiakhta. Furthermore, no precautions had been neglected to prevent awakening the suspicions of the Russians in Siberia. It was the Russo-Chinese Bank which, needing a certain quantity of bullion, was transporting it from Russia to its branches at Kiakhta and Ourga. The delicate point was the transfer of the goods from Kiakhta to Maimatchine, the Chinese suburb, and in fact this was the spot at which the real nature of the mysterious traffic was able to be ascertained. The post-office at Kiakhta overflowed for months with enormous heaps of silver ingots. The office of the Bank was similarly blocked with them. The cart of the Chinese postal service at Maimatchine moved backwards and forwards incessantly like a shuttle to transfer the heavy bags gradually to the prefect of that town; the addresses on these bags were fictitious certainly in order to baffle the imagination of the Russian officials. It had unfortunately been indispensable in the interests of the responsibility of the Bank and the post-office to keep an account of the parcels, and to draw up a list on which were inscribed the dates of reception and the quantities received. This list, as is the habit in Russia for all confidential documents, was the pet plaything of those who were interested in it; it was to some

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extent at everybody's disposal. And thus we have been able to certify that from August, 1900, to February, 1901, a sum of more than twenty million roubles passed through the post-office and bank at Kiakhtha.

Where was the money going? At first everybody could say where—to Ourga. The two postal services, Russian and Chinese, which ordinarily took it in turns to provide for the transport of travellers and parcels across the desert, and which had no longer been able, according to the official announcement, to ensure the transit from Kiakhtha to Kalgan since the month of April, 1900, were now exclusively occupied in the transport of silver; for this precious merchandise there was no obstacle. It seems, however, that this curious and significant traffic was not yet being accomplished with the intensity and rapidity which the Chinese Government seemed to desire, for, in the month of November, there arrived a letter at Ourga (already given on another page) from Hsi-ngan, where the Court had just been installed, a letter which shows at once the effectiveness of the Convention of Canton, the embarrassed position of the Court, and also once more the friendly character of Russo-Chinese relations: the Emperor of Russia in the part of the Messiah and deliverer of the Chinese suffering under the brutality of the men of the West.

Apart from the preoccupations created by the Chinese Court for the directors of Russian policy in Mongolia, there was, however, no negligence in establishing in the country an administrative organization to render Russia practically mistress of Mongolia.

Of the enormous sums sent to Ourga nearly two million roubles were retained in that town by the Russian consul. They were utilized intelligently in

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constructing respectable fortifications around the Consulate and the bank; they were in any case sufficient to render any eventual revolt on the part of the Mongols impossible. The Mongols thought that they would serve to defend them against the Chinese hordes. The construction procured very remunerative work for the numerous persons, whose trade as workers in the transport of tea had been at a standstill for several months, a thing which succeeded in winning popular sympathy for the Russians. The fortifications finished, they proceeded to the erection of barracks and cantonments sufficient to quarter a permanent garrison composed of one regiment of infantry, four sotnias of Cossacks, and three field batteries.

The civil administration was at the same time organized according to the system which was succeeding so well in Manchuria. The Russo-Chinese Bank took charge of financial affairs, and resolutely took in hand the exploitation of the gold mines, henceforth an historic episode. Up to this time they had hardly dared to think of the crowning of the work, that is to say, of putting Mongolia under a protectorate or of annexation. For what is true of Manchuria, is even more so of Mongolia: the administration of a country so immeasurably vast and poor necessitates an outlay which the Russian treasury cannot meet on any terms. Now after the month of September, 1900, the mine began to give such extraordinary returns, and explorations in other places were crowned with such success, that hesitation disappeared. There had been an intention of presenting to the Czar as a gift, the return of the best week in the month of November, about a hundred thousand roubles of pure gold.

Furthermore, the Russian Government took care

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to leave to the Khans, nominally, all the political and economic privileges which they had enjoyed under the Manchu dispensation. In this way the civil administration, in so far as it concerned anything but the means of communication, and the financial organization did not cost the Government a single penny. The Russian fiscal organization itself was much more representative than real. The Russian arrangements at Ourga were in some sort a repetition of those which have ensured the peaceful possession of Bokhara.

From the month of December, 1900, an advance was at last made to the execution of the great plan, which had been the motive for the occupation of the country. The line of the future Trans-Mongolian railway from Kiakhta to Kalgan was made out. Two enormous automobiles, imported from America under the pretext of serving to transport materials for the Trans-Siberian served this purpose. Of very ingenious construction, suited to the sandy nature of the soil, heated with wood, which necessitated enormous boilers, these engines were at first the terror and then the wonder of the people. They further constituted with the twenty heavy trucks drawn by each of them, a gigantic experiment in a rail-less railway for the desert. These two extraordinary trains on level ground (but over a track where no previous road existed) covered about four miles an hour. The plan of the road must have been finished in the month of June, 1901. In the month of December of the same year the work of laying the rails was begun.

While the Western allies of Russia were triumphantly marching in Tchi-li from one check to another, the Czar saw immense territories being peacefully annexed to his empire. The Russian residence at Ourga (forti-

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fications, barracks, and officials' houses) was so well established that already in December, 1900, a symbolic solemnity was eventually arranged which was to leave a profound impression upon the people. The Imperial flag was to be hoisted on the new fortifications. The governor of Transbaikalia, General Matsieffsky, was to find in this a compensation for not having replaced Grodekoff after the drowning of Blagovestchensk.

He then was the man charged to take possession of Mongolia officially as a Russian protectorate. He left Kiakhta on December 22 (old style), 1900; on the 26th he proceeded to the inauguration of the new military and civil buildings. And the evening of the same day he gave a grand banquet at the Russian Consulate, at the end of which he made a short but important address, in which he declared himself fortunate in presiding over this "festival of union," and in being able to announce that before the end of a year the limits of the Empire would be further advanced towards the south by a considerable distance.

This prediction was soon realized. A little time after the return of General Matsieffsky to Transbaikalia, it was learned at Kiakhta and Ourga, from a source which has remained unknown, that the Mongol tribe of the Tsakhars, which lives in the neighbourhood of the Great Wall in the extreme south of Mongolia, taking advantage of the panic of 1900, had appropriated enormous quantities of tea, which had been sent from Kalgan, and had never arrived at Ourga. More than forty tons of tea were concerned, which represented a respectable sum of money. The great Russian and Chinese houses at Kiakhta made complaints to the authorities, and although it was certainly

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strange that this fantastic theft, which caused the disappearance of three hundred carts, four hundred oxen, a hundred horses, and a hundred men, over and above the tea, could have been perpetrated by three hundred brigands badly armed and reputed to be cowardly, the Government was pleased to declare such a state of things intolerable, and to promise magnanimously to the merchants, and the thousands of Mongols who lived by the transit, to re-establish free communication between Kalgan and Kiakhta, and to ensure uninterrupted traffic for the future by a constant and efficacious superintendence of the whole extent of the route.

For this purpose it was evidently necessary before all things to be established at the terminus of the road. Now the Government had prepared this stroke at a time when the legend of the Tsakhars had not yet come to the birth. It had provided the accomplishment of a bold raid from Tsitsikhar, in Manchuria, the headquarters of General Grodekoff, up to Kalgan. This expedition figures in the statement of the movements of the army of occupation as a simple reconnaissance undertaken about January 15, 1901. Its real aim was not known even by the Russian officers. Were it not for the proverbial impossibility of keeping official secrets which characterizes the Russians, it would never have been divulged. From participators in the raid themselves it has been possible to learn only these details, very interesting however, that they arrived at the monastery of Si-ouan-tse on the pass between Kalgan and the Mongolian plateau about February 15, and that each of them (there were more than fifty of them) carried ingots of silver as baggage. The rumours concerning the attack of the Tsakhars

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strangely coincided as to date with the success of this "raid of reconnaissance."

Under these circumstances there was no longer any check to be feared for an expedition which, starting from Kiakhta, should cross the whole of Mongolia to punish the Tsakhars and establish Russian control along the caravan route.

The project was immediately put into execution. The sotnia of Cossacks, which had the honour of accomplishing this journey, free from danger, but important, took with it the engineer who had built the fort at Ourga. His mission was to construct on the Pass of Si-ouan-tse some fortified barracks permitting the troops to guard the southern terminus of the great road, which in this manner would be entirely in the hands of the Russian Government.

The Pass of Si-ouan-tse has, however, another importance from that of being an essential point on the road. It dominates the descent to Kalgan, to Hsi-ouan-hoa, to Peking. It dominates as strategic base the whole country between the Wall and the Yellow Sea. The whole point is to know, whether it can become a practical strategic base. The construction of the Trans-Mongolian is the answer to the question, and it is useful to call to mind the dictum of Taïtsong-Khungtaï-dji, founder of the Manchu Dynasty, which he uttered in 1638 after having made himself master of this defile :

"The master of this Pass is the master of China."

At the time when the Kalgan expedition was being prepared, it was at last thought opportune to declare officially to the Khans and the Mongol people the existence of the Russian protectorate over the country. For this joyous event the festival of the new year was

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chosen, the greatest festival known to the Mongols, and on February 19, 1901, the seal was thus finally set to the history of the peaceful conquest of Mongolia.

Were it not for the immeasurable ignorance of Western diplomacy, nothing since the Ems despatch has equalled in greatness the secret but complete accomplishment of the formidable task which has consisted in the conquest of an empire without shedding blood, and without arousing the hatred of anybody. Cecil Rhodes himself is surpassed by this almost anonymous master-stroke.

XXV

*The Protectorate of Thibet. The Czar Buddhist Emperor.
The Embassies from Lhasa. The Russo-Chinese
Treaty concerning Thibet. Yung-Lu and the Fate
of the Manchu Dynasty*

FOR the marvellous success of all these enterprises, so colossal in their scope, one preliminary condition, however, existed, without which all the efforts and all the genius expended would have been futile. This was the support of the Buddhist clergy, the friendship of the oligarchy of Lhasa.

It is impossible to know on what occasions and in what manner the Holy See of Lhasa, in the person of Daltieff, the secretary of the De-Çri, intervened directly in the course of the crisis of 1900. But it is certain that the activity of this high Lhassean functionary of Russian nationality was not without consequences.

In 1899 he prepared the Russian protectorate in Mongolia. In the month of November in that year he summoned to Lhasa the Khoubilgan of Erdeni-Tsiou, the superior of the greatest Mongol monastery, who comes in rank immediately after the Bogdo-Guiguen of Ourga, and is most often charged with political missions which the Pope of Ourga cannot fulfil, because of his position above mundane affairs. Letters

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were handed over to this dignitary at Lhasa for the Bogdo-Guiguen, which were commended to his special notice.

"Think, O sinless Lama," said the Chancellor Daltieff to him, "that thou bearest upon thyself the peace and well-being of the animated beings of the snowy Empire of the North."

On his return journey the high Lama reports having remarked three days from Lhasa, in the midst of the Mongol yurtas (felt-tents) of the Thibetan colony of Datsag-Mongols, an *oross* house inhabited by two strangers, who wished him a happy journey. There existed then, at that time even, a kind of Russian embassy at Lhasa, the "impenetrable" mysterious city.

When in the month of April, 1900, the letters from Lhasa had been delivered to the Bogdo-Guiguen of Ourga, there were frequent communications between him, Touchet-Khan, and the Great Noyan, generalissimo of the Mongol militia, who was the brother of the Khoubilgan of Erdeni-Tsiou. The effect of these communications was the immediate adoption of the proposals of the Russian consul, and the dispersion of the Mongol army, upon which the Noyan expressed himself as a good Buddhist in these terms :

"For the welfare of animated beings I can henceforth keep my title without ever being constrained to assume my office."

Other steps of the Holy See doubtless supported Russian action in the different countries in Asia in which she was engaged. Doubtless, too, they have all succeeded. For, indeed, care was taken to show in what sense the Russo-Thibetan relations required to be interpreted. And this, in some measure, final

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proceeding, resuming the whole vast concatenation of events in question, was of a moving symbolic grandeur.

When the Manchu Court had retired to Hsin-gan, there to await its uncertain fortunes ; when the unhappy heirs of the great Taï-tsong, reduced to impotence, preferred the protection of the Czar to annihilation by his rivals of the West, and the calm of Buddhist clericalism to the turbulent hypocrisy of the Christian missions ; when in short it was manifest that no power in the world would reign in China except Buddhism and its protector, the Holy See of Lhasa, in sign of the beginning of a new phase of history, proceeded to the ancient and venerable ceremony, which throughout the course of ages had consecrated the supreme powers of Asia.

The Chancellor of Lhasa, loaded with presents, the symbols of the circumstances, repaired to Livadia. The Czar, barely convalescent from a serious illness, received him with the splendour, mitigated by intimacy, which the occasion required. The ambassador returned, bearer of an Imperial missive and significant presents.

On that winter evening, when, under the white splendour of the moon, he crossed the line between Kiakhta and Maimatchine, which had separated the two greatest empires in the world—at the moment when this extraordinary man, who bore upon him the mystery of the Russo-Chinese peril, went at a gallop to rejoin the already distant caravan, he at last broke his secrecy—

“ Yes, I return to Lhasa, the navel of the world. Look : everything turns around this navel. Once again the omnipotence of Sakya-Mouni, incarnated in

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my divine Lord the Dalai-Lama, is manifested for the welfare of animated beings."

He made a gesture of imposing grandeur towards the immensity of the desert.

"Yes, the universe will embrace the faith and will be redeemed. Yes, with this aim I have worked. Yes, from Lhasa for ever will emanate strength and power : Buddha is the centre. Yes, by the virtue of the Torch of the Faith, the Pantchan-Lama, I have accomplished my task. Yes, Buddha has transplanted Pekin from the Yellow Sea to the White Sea. And the White Emperor from this time henceforth is the Lord and Dispenser of the Gifts of Religion."

He stretched out his hand, and his look, strangely calm, seemed to pierce the thoughts of him whom he addressed. At last he smiled :

"Good luck be with thee. Come to Lhasa." He turned his horse. And as he withdrew the bluish and icy gleam of the moon reflected on the gold silk of his mantle, seemed to expand and finally resolve his body into a vast silvery halo.

The enigmatic vision of this strange messenger evidently could not be sufficient to render the enormous revolution in the Buddhist world, which it symbolized, valid in the configuration of the Asiatic Powers. The Ta-Tsing had lost the time-honoured direction of the Buddhists. The Czars had appropriated it, this was an accomplished fact. But this fact remained to be recognized, at least in Asia, in order to serve the policy of Russia.

A new master-stroke of diplomacy was required ; it was necessary to bring the Manchu Dynasty to admit the independence of Thibet, and to abandon henceforth to its powerful friend the care of protecting

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that distant country which brought nothing but expenditure to its protectors. It was necessary to get China herself to ratify the effective Russo-Thibetan agreement, and in this way to acquire officially the right to draw practical consequences from the change that had occurred.

Such a resignation—which, to complete the difficulty, had to be kept secret from the rival maritime Powers—would never have been realizable without the help of the most powerful men at the Court of Peking. But these men were found.

In no point falsifying the rule of history which certifies that dynasties in decadence hasten their ruin by incessant family rivalries, the Ta-Tsing had been for years a prey to the ambitions of princes, who, not perhaps without reason, believed themselves more fit to reign than the lawful Emperor. The atmosphere of the Palace Revolution did not cease (and does not cease) to rule at Peking. The complete discomfiture of the I-khe-touan had eliminated that one of the pretenders who, being father to the heir-presumptive, and eager himself to govern through his son, had made an instrument for himself which had turned against him in the end: Prince Tuan found himself banished. But another nephew of the Dowager Empress had taken up Tuan's projects.

Yung-lu, an ultra-intimate friend of the Empress and Chancellor of the Empire, married his daughter to Prince Tchoun, brother of the Emperor, and his niece to Phou-loun, the heir to the throne. And he waited for the moment to proceed, with the connivance of the Empress, to a new revolution deposing the Emperor, Kwang-Su, and installing on the throne his niece's young husband. With this end he made good use of

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the immense influence which his comrade Li-lien-ying, the chief of the eunuchs, exercises over all the high civil functionaries of the Empire, while he could himself, as former generalissimo, count on the sympathy of the higher military officers.

His plan of reforms on a national basis meant, however, the complete ruin of the European party, whose strongest head is the Governor-General Yuan-chi-kai, who again on his side is supported by the maritime Powers. He could not then act without having previously paralyzed any intervention from these Powers, always formidable. He was in consequence obliged to guarantee for himself the benevolent neutrality, if not support, of their adversary, Russia. It is thus that, in view of a palace revolution, of no great real interest, the Court of Peking, and notably the national party, was able, by a bargain skilfully conducted on both sides, to gain a platonic Russian benevolence, which seems important to them, in exchange for a platonic recognition of an accomplished fact, which seems important to Russia.

Now, while the revolution at Peking is slow in manifesting itself—probably because Russia is asking for fresh friendly concessions—the final arrangements with reference to Thibet has been realized since the month of July, 1902.

The confidential Russo-Chinese treaty, relative to the conditions of supremacy in the Buddhist world, once adopted, was bound to be signified as a matter of urgency to the great dignitaries of the Church; and it is from this side that has come the possibility of knowing the text of this diplomatic instrument, in three languages at once, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese.

The text is as follows :—

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Art. 1. Thibet constituting a territory situated between Western Siberia and central China, Russia and China are mutually engaged to work for the preservation of peace in this country. In case of an outbreak of disturbances in Thibet, China to guarantee this district for herself, and Russia, to protect her frontiers, will have to send troops there after having exchanged mutual notices.

Art. 2. In case of a fear that a third Power may seek to foment disturbances in Thibet directly or indirectly, Russia and China pledge themselves to take with common accord such measures as shall appear to them necessary to repress such disturbances.

Art. 3. Absolute liberty to practise the Russian orthodox religion, and the religion of the Lamas will be introduced into Thibet; but all other religious teaching will be rigorously excluded. With this end the Grand-Lama and the Chief of the Orthodox mission at Peking are bound to act amicably and in common accord, in the sense intended, in order to ensure the extension of the two religions, and foresee all the measures indispensable for avoiding religious disputes.

Art. 4. Thibet will be gradually endowed with an autonomous administration; with this end Russia and China will share the task between them. Russia undertakes to proceed to the organization of the military forces of the country according to the European model, and pledges herself to do so with benevolence, and without incurring reproaches. China, for her part, will occupy herself with the economic development of Thibet, and especially with that of her external trade.

In the circles at Canton which found themselves involved in the negotiation of the Convention of Canton, it was thought prudent to explain to the Chinese,

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vaguely disturbed by the rumours attaching to this extraordinary revolution, the points most interesting to them which arise from this text, not destined for publicity. The following commentary was then communicated to the Chinese Press without the text, as if it was the text itself :—

Art. 1. China, because of her weakness and her desire to maintain peace, cedes to Russia her rights concerning Thibet.

Art. 2. Russia guarantees to China the integrity of the “ Provinces ” (China properly so called).

Art. 3. If, however, in case of war or revolt, China finds herself not in a position to accomplish the re-establishment of order in the country, Russia can intervene to re-establish order.

Art. 4. Russia takes charge of Thibet, and administers it by her agents.

Art. 5. China will retain consulates in Thibet.

Art. 6. Russia takes the Chinese traders under her protection.

Art. 7. If Chinese refugees show themselves in Thibet, Russia will extradite them.

Art. 8. Russia will not collect in Thibet duties of entry upon Chinese merchandise.

Art. 9. Russia will treat the natives in a friendly spirit.

Art. 10. Russia will not impose her religion upon the population.

Art. 11. Russia will have the monopoly of the exploitation of Thibet so far as the construction of railways and the mining industries are concerned ; but the Chinese are to have every facility for acquiring shares in such enterprises.

Art. 12. The construction of railways and fortifica-

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tions shall not occasion the destruction of Buddhist sanctuaries.

The economic relations, those alone important from the Chinese point of view, are alone mentioned explicitly in this manifesto.

It is true that from the political point of view the colonizing Powers alone are interested in it.

The enormous Russo-Buddhist block will henceforth weigh upon southern Asia, and will endeavour to intercept the French and English roads of expansion. On the other hand, it enfolds, it chokes, it crushes China. And it may be feared that its constitution, contemplated as an episode in the collective, silent, terrible, march of Russian expansion, may signify the decisive step towards Russian hegemony and the consolidation of a world-wide Russo-Chinese Empire.

XXVI

Western and Russian Plans in Asia. The Russo-Chinese Peril

HERE, then, are the facts whose sum total constitutes the present state of what is called the Far Eastern Question. At first sight they seem paradoxical and even improbable. But the logical tie which binds them all to the gigantic plan of Russian expansion is so strong that it is henceforth impossible to see anything in this historic episode except the successive phases of a preconceived plan. And here we have as it were a consolation in this epoch for which great political enterprises and adventurous projects seem to belong to another age.

The problem of the Far East is a coherent one, and every new fact, political or other, which is connected with it, will necessarily find its place, its explanation, and its meaning in the sum total of the facts co-ordinated by the scheme which has just been outlined.

Some have occurred, which to the superficial minds of Western diplomatists desirous of "saving their faces" seem in contradiction with this scheme. It has been possible to believe in a great victory of the West over China, a victory which would have ruined Russian aspirations. The payment of an indemnity

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of war, the return, at least temporary, of the dynasty from the interior of the country to the residence, Peking, fortified by the Westerns against the dynasty itself, lastly the agreements, Anglo-German concerning the Yang-tse, Anglo-Japanese, as well as the self-styled Manchurian convention, to which Western diplomacy clutches, thinking thereby to save itself from the whirlpool of Russo-Chinese policy by which it is being swallowed ; all this may be interpreted as European success and Russo-Chinese defeat.

But so far as the indemnity is concerned, it is to be remarked that, as for the part of it supplied by the customs, it is paid by the European importers themselves, who open outlets for themselves in order to close them by increasing the duties on entry ; and that, as for the other part, it will serve to nourish and exasperate the hatred of the West in the mind of the people, and create a very ferocious condition of feeling in the political or military contingencies to which we have to look forward.

The Anglo-German agreement will probably be the source of inter-European conflicts, which would weaken the West in favour of Russia. As for the Japanese alliance, which claims to guarantee the integrity of China on the same basis as the secret convention of Canton, which looks forward to the nominal supremacy of the Manchus over the tributary countries in which Russia was to have a free hand, it only constitutes a skilful means of making England assume the responsibility for the uncontrollable Imperialist passions of her little rivals in the Far East, and the Franco-Russian agreement, which a ferocious statesman has been pleased to call " France to the Russians " (*France-aux-Russes*), has ended as a worthy

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complement to the abyss of Western inanity by organizing that collection of extraordinary forces in which, in case of disputes between the two Powers of the Far East, the two Western Powers will have to play the game. These successes of the West show themselves to be in reality a Russian victory, almost as considerable as the peaceful conquest of her new Chinese provinces.

In fine, as for that last refuge of desperate diplomacy, the Manchurian convention, it is calculated to calm Western anxieties, but it makes no change whatever in the *status quo* created by the occupation and organization of the provinces. The retirement of the Russian troops from the Manchurian towns, to form garrisons in the outskirts of stations in the neighbourhood of towns, does not mean that the country is Chinese. Even—and this will seem quite inexplicable to European nationalists—the fact that on the maps the countries in question will remain yellow, and will not be assimilated to the enormous patches of green which generally mark Russian possessions, will not have the smallest importance. Military forces will soon be useless in Manchuria ; there will be the police forces composed of Chinese troops, but . . . commanded by Russian officers. And the only enemy that will be met by these troops or the Russians lent to Manchuria will be Japanese or European. There will be no commercial monopoly of course ; in France, in Russia, as everywhere else, such a thing no longer exists, but concessions will be wanted, which will be received perhaps at Peking, but granted at St. Petersburg. On the other hand, the fiscal arrangements of the Russo-Chinese Bank continue. Manchuria will then be, once the convention is executed,

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a Russian province under civil rule, as it has been for some time under military rule.

Over and above this an absolute silence has been preserved as to Mongolia, and Russia has hardly ventured to publish the text and commentary of the treaty settling the question of Thibet.

The great victory of the white race over the yellow race is thus reduced to some blood-stained scenes played in favour of Russian policy.

But the Far Eastern question in its totality is not political, it is economical. Russia pursues aims of an economic order. The West wished to do the same, and the Chinese nation has never pursued any other. Thus the question reintegrates its veritable domain, but under conditions altogether modified, and this modification has been the steady aim of Russo-Chinese policy.

It is evident that the dream of the Westerns was to create a kind of India in China. But they set about it badly. For it is impossible to constrain the Chinese to submit to European exploitation without offering them, fully and completely, the very means which at an early date will permit them to replace it by a Chinese exploitation.

China, in fact, is not an India. We might almost say exactly the contrary. And to "bring into currency," even were it a part of China, according to the economic principles which reign in Europe would be certain ruin to the people who should undertake such a task.

Though the "yellow peril" has become a commonplace, it is important even yet to recapitulate what would infallibly be the phases of the processes of bringing China into currency.

In the first period we should see Western capital work-

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ing in China with the aid of machines and tools manufactured in the West, but naturally handled by Chinese labour, which is cheap. During this phase China will be able to be an excellent outlet for Western industry. But only the great capitalists would profit by this state of things.

In the second period European capital will work in China with the apparatus manufactured in China itself at extremely low prices ; already the rebound upon the markets and productions of the West will be terrible. But at this time the capital employed will still be very productive.

In the third period Chinese capital, that is to say the inexhaustible economic force of the immense productive co-operative societies, the enormous capital of the workers themselves, will be substituted for European capital. The struggle of capital against organized work is a vain one ; the rapid and disastrous decline of the European States will then be inevitable.

In the fourth period, lastly, the present industrial countries will serve as outlets for Chinese production, and the ruin of Europe will be final.

To believe that the yellow peril consists exclusively in the cheapness of actual manual labour is to display complete ignorance of Chinese social conditions. To believe that the yellow peril consists in the possibility of the Chinese nation adopting European military barbarism in order to drown the West under the waves of an immense and irresistible invasion of brute force, is to base our ideas on a conception of national life which the Chinese have abandoned for two thousand years. The few experiments in militarization which are being undertaken since the horrors of 1900 are to be imputed solely to the Manchu Dynasty, which, resting

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on the army, is only sustained by a show of brute force. China herself will never be militarized. She will crush the West by her civilizing force.

But this is not all. These considerations are not only of a theoretic interest; they have taken their place in Russian thought; they enter into the plan of Russian policy. The events described, the unshakeable logic which guides the activity of the men who govern Russia, the very conception of this activity, demonstrate the fact. They constitute the mainspring of Russo-Chinese policy. They are henceforth the Russo-Chinese peril, the formidableness of which is different from, because it is more immediate than, that of the simple yellow peril characterized above.

And here we have at last the scheme of this peril, fatal to Europe. Russia, the strongest military power, will be associated with the strongest industrial power. Russia is the only Western country which has nothing to fear from the counter stroke of putting China into currency. She wants not only the material means to proceed to such an enterprise, but, further, the European mechanism of civilization. The capitalist system, in the Western sense, as a social system in general, does not exist for the Russian people. It is solely the necessity in which the Russian Government is placed, of playing at being a European State, which forces it to promote capitalism reluctantly; this involves the Empire in financial difficulties of a very serious character. The very base of capitalism—industry—is wanting to Russia. The dream is to create this base in China. And here is the peril for the West in all its grandiose splendour—to capture the yellow peril to the profit of Russia, to prevail over the revolutions which are involved in the four phases of this peril in

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order to crush the West as China would have done ; in short, to imitate the great Mongol Emperors, who, they too, knew how to govern twenty peoples with different languages ; to possess northern China, not as a colony which is exploited, not as an outlet into which to pass the produce of a future industrial Russia, but as an integral part of the Empire, as the industrial centre of an Empire, which in its other portions will never be otherwise than agricultural ; to realize this gigantic plan of making China be to Russia what the department of the North is to France.

And even while embodying these elements in the notion of the Russo-Chinese peril, we omit the point which gives the peril its threatening character. It must in fact be added that these same ideas have become conscious and effective among the Chinese themselves, and that the Yellow World now knows that it constitutes the insuperable, frightful, Yellow Peril. More than any others, the elected chiefs of the great co-operative societies take stock of the real situation. Their commercial policy, and for that matter their words, prove it.

And while a vile conceit, based upon ignorance, veils from the people of the West the abyss into which they are tumbling, up there on the pass of Si-ouan-tse, which dominates Peking and China, the Czar who builds his fortresses, the Czar suzerain of the Manchu-Chinese Dynasty and the Dalaï-Lama, will be able to say to his beloved allies, like the superhuman Tchengis-Khan :

“ Up to this point you have helped me ; I have no further need of you. I hold the Key of the World.”

The Russo-Chinese peril has been created.

XXVII

The Chinese as Individuals and as a Nation

HOW little do we know of that peril which is incarnated in the Chinese nation !

The study of China is the most difficult thing in the world for a European. To observe the Chinese with impartiality he has to renounce his Western prejudices one by one. Supplied with a different logic from that of the subject of his inquiries, he must fear to make a mistake at every moment. To depreciate or praise China according to personal prejudices will always be easy ; but to judge China an objectivity is required which puts Western civilization on one side. This objectivity once acquired, there is no longer any occasion to seek a just mean between the enthusiasts and the superficial revilers who pullulate in Europe. Nothing is so easy as to be impartial towards China. For the Chinese have towards ourselves the pathos of distance. They do not hook themselves on to the skirts (alas, too short !) of European civilization ; we are indifferent to them. And this loftiness, this calm in presence of the furious snorting of the Western beast, is a feature of a dominating character, which must render them sympathetic to us.

The hideous negroes, idlers, liars, drunkards, inspire

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a profound disgust in the European (who clings to noble and strong psychic manifestations), because they can laugh at nothing like idiots, because they can cry like new-born babes, because they have the ignoble weakness characteristic of dogs to lick the hand which holds them in slavery while feeding them, and because they show the supreme humility of the ass who recognizes without revolt that his driver is his superior. The Chinese, on the other hand, have never had the humility to think that they could have any need of us. They humiliate us profoundly by the serenity of their social conceptions, prove to us that in order to be happy they only want to be left quiet ; while we Westerns manifestly do not enjoy the possibility of being happy in peaceful work, and find ourselves driven to horrible necessities of violence and murder.

When we vaunt to the Chinese the flowers of our civilization—capitalism, militarism, nationalism, religious hypocrisy, and the modern technical appliances, which at bottom serve these four social cancers above all ; when we vaunt these horrors to them as being the condition of superiority to which they are to aspire, they look at us with their little comma-like eyes, they wrinkle their round faces, they seem to say to us : “Talk away, friend, talk away. You are losing your time. In spite of your telephones and your railways, you are only a savage animal and an idiot.”

And however well you may have fortified yourself before arrival with all the Western prejudices this, affirmation repeated again and again through long years rouses your curiosity and invites you to study instead of boasting, unless your cerebral compartments no longer lend themselves to a salutary, but always disagreeable, disturbance.

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That is why we come to love the Chinese. There is in this before everything else a question of intellectual probity.

Our history which tells only of changes upon changes, catastrophes, contortions, ephemeral and furious fits of madness, incoherences, regards with ashamed amazement their history in which nothing insignificant and external has happened, in which for centuries the uninterrupted development of the pacific life of the masses is the summary of national history, in which the pretensions and grandiose epics, which brutify peoples, have been avoided ; in which the European motto of progress " by fire and sword " is replaced by this other—" by work."

What constitutes the originality of China is not, as is believed in Europe, the complete subordination of the individuality of the man to the family, but the fact that the individual is fixed in society by " the three coordinates of social space," by the " Three Relations," father-son, man-wife, master-servant.

It is this system of relations which, continuously widened, absorbs at last the infinity of the race, and becomes a principle of State.

You will find peoples in which the first of these "relations" is everything, but the State hardly suspected, as among the nomad tribes of the Tuaregs.

You will find peoples in which the combination of the two first relations possesses rights carried to the highest degree of power, in which the father can condemn the mother or the child to death, but in which, outside this patriarchal system, and even in complete opposition to it, the third "relation"—that between master and servant—acts under the mask of the State, keeping an autonomy so much the more complete, that it throws confusion into the patriarchal system,

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hampers its working, restrains, and, at most, annuls the paternal prerogative, in a word destroys the unity of the social organization and creates psychic complications which prevent the natural development of individuals (Rome).

You will find peoples in which this antagonism between the combination of the first two relations and the third becomes acute—the State and the family household struggling for the possession of the progeny ; then we have the incoherence of the social system, constant contradiction between the morality of the State (third relation, search of place, egoism, suppression of sentiment, master and servant) and natural morality (combination of the two purely family relations, filial or amorous attachment, passion, supra-utilitarianism, instinctive movements); the peoples which wear out their forces in this unconscious internal struggle are the most sick, the most unquiet, the nearest to the end (West).

You will find, lastly, no longer peoples, but agglomerations of individuals, in which the two first relations have no longer any efficacy, in which the third, the principle of State hierarchy, alone directs, in which the basis of life in common is a political base (monarchy, oligarchy, commune, republic).

You will not find another people like the Chinese people: the Three Relations fusing together with equal authority not to form a State, which would be an amplification of the family, but a vast co-operative and mutual society of civilization, which has no need of being directed in its totality, which has no need of a State, which institutes mutual relativity even in the category “master and servant,” and which for that constitutes a unity in the point of view of civilization,

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but does not even know the point of view of State or policy.

The European mind is, as it seems, still too clumsy to know how to make the distinction, necessary and already palpable enough to the Chinese, between "people," "nation," "State," and "country!" All that is for the poor Western more or less the same thing; but that is not perhaps a reason for making the Orientals suffer from it. It is absolutely necessary to erect an impassable logical barrier at least between the groups "people, nation," and "State, country!" For if the two first are considered as social units based on the co-operation of the Three Relations, indeed as groupings which are distinguished by characteristic atavisms, beliefs, morals, habits, civilizations, the two last are units created exclusively on the base of the third relation—"master and servant"; they have, as such, no significance for the life, the strength, the worth, the future, of a people or nation. So long as Western pseudo-science flounders in the confusion (due to the State sophisms of the Romans) between nation and State, between civilization and politics, between the life of the people, and the artifice of the non-workers, it will be impossible to emerge from the dirt-heaps under which assuming and absurd writers have buried the clear data of simple ethnological observation.

China, then, as a national unit is essentially a unique type. And this constitutes at the same time her great strength and her small weakness.

Her weakness, because the rigidity of the system of the three social co-ordinates maintains a moral and social discipline by making it repose exclusively upon two elements, which can certainly render it indestruc-

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tible, but can also collapse in consequence of simple divergencies in individual sentiments—love and respect (and we see thus that these two sentimental dispositions being extinguished in an individual, the latter finds himself immediately outside the social system, an anti-social being, a criminal).

Its strength : because this discipline, fortified by heredity, selection, adaptation, becomes the immense canvas which serves at the same time as a field of manœuvres and as guide in life. In this psychic discipline, in the creation of a psychic unity (which alone can be the distinguishing sign of a nation) there are the vertebral column and skull, and the spinal marrow and brain of a people. Its reflex subconscious movements depend on it as do its actions apparently conscious ; there is the stay which ensures its unity ; there also is the reservoir of its intelligence, the scheme of its logic, the channels of its will. The unity of the conception and sense of life thus becomes perfect. The third relation, fused in this unity, is not felt as in opposition to the two others. The co-ordinate “ director-directed,” that is to say in the European form the idea of government, politics, State, rule disappears, in so far as it may be a source of dissensions. The life of the people, psychically one and indivisible, resumes all. The State, superfluous, non-existent as an organization different from the popular life, cannot be the object of reasonings or of popular actions. That is why in China revolutions, revolts, political criticisms are at once revolts against the civilizing unity of the people ; in fact, crimes.

The barbarous West alone has been able to claim that a nation which does not revolt does not progress. On the contrary, that which revolts is not a nation,

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but an agglomeration of individuals which has not been able to organize itself in such a way that the category "director-directed" is co-ordinated with the two others.

The nation begins where the State ends. A nation progresses according as its psychical unity is accentuated. A State which progresses is a State which destroys this characteristic of the nation. A State which progresses, which accentuates the relation "director-directed," runs counter to the task which is incumbent upon the nation, prevents the nation from fulfilling its first duty, which is to aid the integral development of the individual by giving him the means to fix for himself freely, honestly, and in conformity with his faculties, therefore according to his natural rights, the place which is suited to him in the three co-ordinates of social space. That nation alone exists which resumes its collective activity in creating an organization as fitted as is possible to realize these data.

China alone exists as a nation.

These principles of the national psychology of the Chinese once certified, nothing can be worked out so logically and with so much lucidity as a study of the psychic qualities of the Chinese as an individual. In absolute contrast with the hybrid soul, which indicates the mean of modern Europeans and which necessarily becomes more enigmatic in its manifestations as it is more closely studied, so it is easy to analyse, following their external manifestations, the enormous superiorities of the Chinese, the vigorous faculties issuing from the all but perfect adaptation to circumstances, which assure him a vitality well calculated to alarm the flighty European.

Before all things there is the extraordinary refine-

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ment of the nervous system. The mysterious superiority of having a marvellous sensitiveness to all sensuous pleasures, and an amazing absence of sensitiveness to all pains, an inexhaustible patience in enterprises whose success depends on circumstances outside the individual, and an irresistible impetus in actions proceeding from purely individual movements, the indestructible unconscious force which ensures that the nerves always react to the greatest advantage of the organism, the supreme perfection in these very reactions; lastly, the formidable aggressiveness of the nervous energy, which at any moment prevails over externals, and has been stupidly called apathy: it is the most admirable organization of the subconscious life that is anywhere noted in a collection of individuals.

The Chinese lies down and goes to sleep anywhere—on a staircase, on a heap of stones, and he remains there without stirring, like a log of wood. Cut off one of his limbs, he will hardly cry out. But mark, too, his extreme pleasure in tasting imperceptible shades of sensation in eating, in drinking, in love, in the enjoyment of colours, and forms; admire the ecstasy into which he is thrown by learned and far-fetched allusions, by unexpected associations of ideas; understand his refined plays upon words, his formidable satires based on infinitesimal points of ridicule, his baffling irony, his cutting acuteness, which is Nietzsche raised to the highest power.

He is admirably organized to live, to enjoy and suffer, to die. Persevering, robust, a desperate worker, economical, industrious, the external side of life does not oppress him. And life is indifferent to him. At the least reverse he is capable of disembowelling him-

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self, and dying stoically, because he himself decides that so it shall be. He dies of disease without regret, calm, stoical, because he sees himself in the fated and continuous chain of events in the march of the world. In war he flies from death; for war, being immoral, interrupts the course of nature; to permit oneself to be killed in war is a crime, it is to lend one's assistance to the savage beasts, who in killing are insurgents against the eternal continuity of the life of the universe.

The insight! The sublime insight of these . . . cowards! Again the same insight in what Europeans persist in wishing to call the religion of the Chinese!

Is the Chinese monotheist, polytheist, atheist? He is none of these things, and, splendid result, he is religious. The time-honoured animistic ideas which were only the simplistic anthropomorphization of natural phenomena were subtilized by the social philosophy of Confucius and Lao-tse to the degree of no longer constituting anything more than symbols for the use of the masses.

And if, later on, the masses of the people have shown the characteristic trait of all masses, which consists in reconstructing realities behind the symbols, this is a fact which has to do with folk-lore and not with religion, as occurs among all other peoples.

The popular superstitions which the Chinese have created are at bottom only the concrete forms of symbols which were to the social philosophy what Greek art was to Christian morality. But the admirable thing is that these superstitions, under the blows dealt by philosophy, have been put outside the flow of the social life, encysted in the rigidity of ritual, and that the system of the three co-ordinates, relations, or social dimensions has become at the same time

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religious belief, philosophical theory, and social practice.

Under these conditions it is only natural that a new faith, rather a new system of superstitions, Buddhism, a decadent offshoot from the Yoga-tchara and transformed Buddhism of Thibet, should not have changed the reasoned conceptions which were already dominant in China. The Chinese people has taken from it certain picturesque and mystic symbols, while remodelling them after its own imagination.

These are loans, a superposition of externals which have never had anything to do with the foundation of Buddhism, nor with the foundation of Chinese sociality; and that so much the less because the principles of Buddhist morality, in so far as they are realizable in life, are identical with the principles of Chinese philosophy.

Thus at the moment when other peoples were building up for themselves monstrous scaffoldings of beliefs to support the rules of conduct indispensable to life in common, the Chinese were already founding these same rules without knowing it. Over and above this there was neither an all-powerful mythology among them, nor an anthropomorphization of primordial premises, but dazzling metaphysics, sagacious, enthusiastic and victorious search for first principles.

The Chinese is a Positivist. He is not contented with the atavistic and vague platitudes which still reign over the Western mind in our days. When twenty-five centuries ago Lao-tse, the greatest thinker of humanity, the marvellous metaphysician, whose principle Confucius took, to deduce his sociology from it, formulated in all its splendour the axiom of evolution (still disputed in Europe in our days !), the labori-

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ous, fanciful and romantically useless philosophical history of the West was already outstripped even before its beginning.

The propositions as to the nature of God, spectres of the anthropomorphizing Indo-European childishness which haunted even Voltaire and Comte, and which Nietzsche himself was again compelled to exorcise, the theorem of the immortality of the soul, a manifestation of a rudimentary mind which does not yet know how to distinguish between the man and the environment—all this had already been banished from the circle of logic ; it was, in fact, illogical, and the mind found itself delivered from thousands of useless, if not injurious, preoccupations, which still weigh upon the mean intellectuality of the West.

They have never had any need of a critique of pure or practical reason.

Oh ! the laughter that is heard when we read in Chinese to learned Chinese the shameless and cunning platitudes by which Kant arrives from his illusory categorical imperative to the reconstruction of a whole insipid and vulgar theism !

For twenty-five centuries the Chinese has not varied as to the fundamentals of his intellectuality, for the critique was done, therefore useless. Morality, conscience, character, the three psychical phenomena most interesting from the social point of view, all have remained intact, because unshakeable, because founded on a logic freed from all that is not in conformity with strict reality. The old national sages, those who are the end of the preceding struggle for logic, no longer known to us, are still listened to by the Chinese, for they give him the stable foundation on which he will build his life.

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There is no occasion to quote the sublime inferences of Lao-tse, the dilute, popularized, and so much the more efficacious conclusions of Confucius, the sociological theorems of Meng-tse, and the countless treatises in applied philosophy which Chinese bibliography shows us.

Filial piety, family harmony, social aspirations, held in equilibrium by the equally strong ties of these three co-ordinates, we find ourselves in the unchangeable medium. That is the ideal.

Neither the family, nor respect, nor egoism—no one of these three is made into a divinity in Chinese sociology.

The Chinese is subject to his father, to all his ancestors, to all his dead ; but he is subject in the same degree (and with the same necessity) to all his loves, all his preferences, all his sympathies ; and, similarly, to all his ambitions, all his anticipations, and all his aims.

He lives, like his dead, in logic ; he lives, like his loved ones, in sentiment ; he lives, like himself alone, in his will.

And the further he goes, the more he improves his faculty of balancing these three vital psychic forces.

And the further he goes, the stronger the confirmation, on his hard calm face, of his contempt for the whole of our scientific apparatus, which seems to him to have no consequence except that of replacing the human by the material, work for an immobility fatal to individuality.

But will he not one day change his view ? There are people in Europe who imagine so. Already these blind prophets, who see a people's activity in nothing

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but its military ferocity, see him creating an army, covering his soil with factories for the raw material of murder ; they see him become by his formidable mass the great conquering horde of the new Tchengis-Khan who will swallow Europe.

These predictions have but slight terrors, based as they are upon complete ignorance of the Chinese character. But the prediction which should terrify is only rarely made ; to see it realized, there is no need for a change of China.

The Chinese nation, old as it is, is always also young. Since the Titan Pouan-Kou, son of Chaos, who sculptured the rind of the globe, and, his work finished, resolved into nature, leaving nothing on the earth but the vermin that covered his body, that is to say the first beings . . . since Fou-hsi, the first king, and the great Yu who reigned before the birth of Abraham, since Hoang-ti, who drove back the Tartars and built the Great Wall, the yellow men have lived for thousands and thousands of years without seeing their vitality diminish. They are as fresh as ever.

Peoples do not wear out like the individuals which compose them. States wear out like men ; for they are dependent on men. Peoples, and above all peoples whose unity is based neither on politics nor on common interests, but on a disposition psychically characteristic, and creative of civilization, these peoples (but where are they outside of the Chinese ?) not only do not die, but strengthen themselves indefinitely, for selection will always cause the survival of the strongest characteristic dispositions, and therefore of the elements most useful to this national psychic unity.

China based upon a psychic unity, China the incarnation of the supreme human force, work, rendered

A RUSSO-CHINESE EMPIRE

stable by this unity ; China the immense and marvelous receptacle of the strongest, the justest, the most psychological, the most logical of organizations ; China the unshakeable co-operative and mutual society !

The gigantic and comic epic which has just inaugurated the decisive struggle between Asia and the West teaches a capital fact upon which Europe would do well to meditate.

It is that even after the sieges of Tien-tsin and Peking, which only show the greatest destructive power in the service of Western barbarism, even after the clumsy dealings of the Manchu Dynasty, which prove nothing for Chinese mentality, even after the masterly action of Russian diplomacy, and the virtual formation of the colossal Russo-Chinese Empire, we must open our eyes and recognize that the result of the invasion of China is ill-omened for the West, and useful solely to the Chinese nation, which is working, and will work.

And lastly, we must abandon our faith that in the life of civilizations the engines of destruction give the superiority : no, it is the patient energy which wins, calm and unrelenting work, the strength to be able to bear peace.

Russo-China in a state of peace, Europe in a state of war—there is the peril !



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